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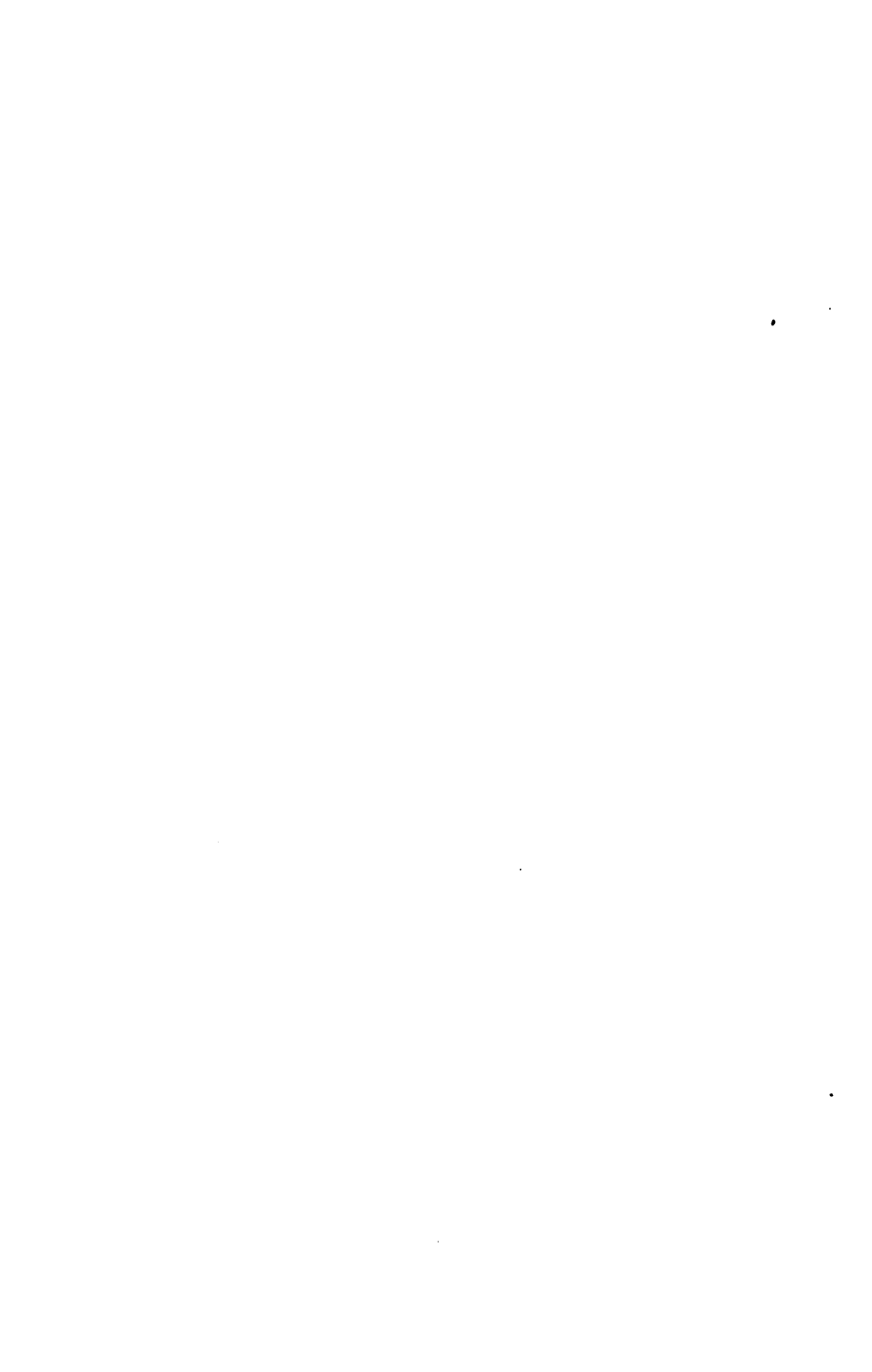
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BY

ALEX. CHARLES EWALD, F.S.A.

[OF THE RECORD OFFICE]

AUTHOR OF 'THE LIFE AND TIMES OF PRINCE CHARLES STUART'
'THE LIFE OF SIR ROBERT WALPOLE' ETC.



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‘ . . . The only history worth reading is that written at the time of which it treats, the history of what was done and seen heard out of the mouths of men who did and saw. One fresh draught of such history is worth more than a thousand volumes of abstracts, and reasonings, and suppositions, and theories ; and I believe that as we get wiser we shall take little trouble about the history of nations who have left no distinct records of themselves, but spend our time only in the examination of the faithful documents which, in any period of the world, have been left, either in the form of art or literature, portraying the scenes or recording the events, which in those days were actually passing before the eye of men ’—RUSKIN

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STORIES

FROM THE

STATE PAPERS.

THE GUNPOWDER PLOT.

Almighty God, who hast in all ages shewed thy Power and Mercy in the miraculous and gracious deliverances of thy Church, and in the protection of righteous and religious Kings and States professing thy holy and eternal truth, from the wicked conspiracies, and malicious practises of all the enemies thereof: We yield thee our unfeigned thanks and praise, for the wonderful and mighty deliverance of our gracious Sovereign King *James* the First, the Queen, the Prince, and all the Royal Branches, with the Nobility, Clergy, and Commons of *England*, then assembled in Parliament, by Popish treachery appointed as sheep to the slaughter, in a most barbarous and savage manner, beyond the examples of former ages. From this unnatural conspiracy, not our merit, but thy mercy; not our foresight, but thy providence delivered us: And therefore not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name be ascribed all honour and glory, in all Churches of the saints, from generation to generation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.—Prayer for the happy deliverance of King James the First and the Three Estates of England.*

AT the accession of *James I.* the condition of the Roman Catholics in England was one of galling restrictions, spiteful intolerance, and constant persecution. Under *Mary* the Protestants were the martyrs of the State; under *Elizabeth* the reaction set in, and the Papists had to reap the whirlwind they had sown during the preceding reign. The

crop was an evil one, and as the unhappy son of an oppressed faith had to eat its bitter food, he had every reason to admit that his lines had not fallen in pleasant places. On all sides the Papist was the object of State inspection and irritating control. He dared not confess to his priest or bend the knee to the Host in his own temples; whilst if he failed to attend a Protestant place of worship on the Sabbath, he was liable to a fine of twenty pounds for every month during which he had absented himself. If he were a priest and attempted to say mass, he could be punished by a forfeiture of two hundred marks and a year's imprisonment. Indeed, such a man had no right at all to enjoy English hospitality. By a statute passed in 1585 it was enacted that 'all Jesuits, seminary and other priests ordained since the beginning of the Queen's reign should depart out of the realm within forty days after that session of Parliament; and that all such priests or other religious persons ordained since the said time should not come into England or remain there under the pain of suffering death, as in case of treason;' it was also declared that 'all persons receiving or assisting such priest should be guilty of capital felony.' The Papist who refused to bow down in the house of Rimmon—or, in other words, attend the Sunday services in a Protestant church—was branded as a 'recusant,' and on persisting in his refusal was forced to quit the kingdom; if he dared to return without leave, he laid himself open to execution as a felon, without benefit of clergy. It is true that these harsh laws were not always put into operation, yet no Papist ever felt himself safe from becoming one day

their victim. It was a matter of lenity that he escaped, not of right.

As the health of Elizabeth began visibly to decline, the English Catholics looked forward with hope to the arrival of her successor. It was known that James was the son of Catholic parents; that he had been baptized by a Catholic archbishop, and that he had on more than one occasion openly avowed that he was not a heretic, and that he had not severed himself from the Church. Even if his faith had been doubtful, was it to be expected, it was asked, that he would regard with favour the party which had been the chief agent in hunting his mother to her death? In addition to these surmises, James had given positive proof of the toleration he intended to display. Whilst Elizabeth was lying ill, one Thomas Percy, a kinsman of the Earl of Northumberland, and subsequently one of the Powder Plot conspirators, had been sent on a mission to Scotland, and had returned with the answer that James, on his accession, would deal well with the English Catholics. At the same time the King of Scotland wrote with his own hand a letter to the Earl of Northumberland, stating that when his Majesty should cross the Tweed to wear the crown, the Catholic religion would be tolerated.¹ Buoyed up with these hopes, the Catholics of England warmly supported the cause of James, and were among the most loyal of those who rallied round the throne during the first months of the new monarch's reign.

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, edited by Mrs. Green, November 23, 1605; also, *The Gunpowder Plot*, by Daniel Jardine: a most careful work, now out of print.

For a time it appeared as if the reign of persecution had come to an end. The English Catholics were exempt from attendance upon Protestant churches, they were exonerated from the fines for recusancy, and they were appointed to lucrative posts under the Crown. They were informed that this happy state of things would continue 'so long as they kept themselves upright and civil in all true carriage towards the King and State without contempt.' But the wily James had only used the policy of toleration for his own ends. No sooner did he find himself firmly settled upon the English throne, and felt conscious that the national feeling was warmly hostile to the Papacy, than he resolved to be independent of Catholic support, and to withdraw from the pledge he had solemnly given. He denied that he had ever returned a favourable answer to Percy's mission. He had always been a true son of the English Church, and rather than change his religion he would lose his crown or his life. He summoned his Council, and assured them that he had never entertained any intention of granting toleration to the English Catholics, and that if he thought his sons would condescend to any such course, he would wish the kingdom translated to his daughter. To prove the truth of his words, he issued a proclamation, ordering all Jesuits and priests to quit the kingdom, under pain of being left to the rigour of the laws.

And now, to the dismay and indignation of the duped Catholics, a return to the persecuting policy of Elizabeth was openly adopted. The recusancy fines were enforced. All the laws of Elizabeth against Jesuits and priests were ordered

to be put in execution. A bill was passed, declaring that all persons who had been educated in Catholic colleges on the continent should be incapable of holding lands or goods within the King's dominions. At the same time, any one keeping a schoolmaster who refused to attend a Protestant Church, or who was not licensed by the bishop of the diocese, was liable to forfeit forty shillings for every day he was retained. Thus, practically, Catholic children were to grow up untaught. Their parents declined to entrust them to a Protestant tutor; whilst, if they sent them abroad, they would lose their rights as English subjects. Well might Sir Everard Digby thus write to Lord Salisbury, when he saw promises shamelessly broken and hopes raised only to be cruelly crushed: 'If your Lordship and the State,' he says,¹ 'think it fit to deal severely with the Catholics, within brief there will be massacres, rebellions, and desperate attempts against the King and State. For it is a general received reason amongst Catholics, that there is not that expecting and suffering course now to be run that was in the Queen's time, who was the last of her line and last in expectance to run violent courses against Catholics; for then it was hoped that the King that now is would have been at least free from persecuting, as his promise was before his coming into this realm, and as divers his promises have been since his coming. All these promises every man sees broken.'

When men are subject to persecution for the sake of their religion, the course they pursue is suggested by the tempera-

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, December, 1605.

ment each possesses. The timid shuffle and conceal, the bold defy the law or seek the overthrow of their oppressors. Such was now to be the conduct of the English Catholics. The weak, though sincere, pandered to the policy of the Court ; they worshipped in secret, they attended every Sunday a Protestant Church, and they sent their children to Protestant schools. The more bold refused to dismiss the priests hidden in the secret chambers of their halls and manor-houses, or to follow their religion as if ashamed of it, and were content when discovered to pay the penalty. But there were men amongst the number who openly advocated the Catholic faith, who scorned to accept any compromise, who so fully believed in the truth and purity of their religion, that they not only professed it, but resolved to brave all dangers to see it freed from persecution and once more reinstated as the faith of England. It was this last class which, now that all hopes of relief from the King had to be abandoned, determined to gain its ends by other means and from other agents. In religion, when harassed by persecution, there is little patriotism ; the interests of the creed dominate over those of the country. The Huguenots looked towards England for aid, so now the Catholics looked towards Spain. Negotiations were reopened with the King of Spain for money and assistance. His Majesty was informed that the condition of the English Catholics was hopeless without his help, and he was invited to land an army at Milford Haven, when the western counties would rise in his favour, and every Catholic in England would

rally round his standard. In the reign of Elizabeth such appeals were familiar at the Court of Madrid ; but now the Most Catholic King took very little interest in England, and was far more anxious to conclude an advantageous peace with James than to convert him into a dangerous enemy. He declined to tempt fortune by the creation of another Armada.

Thus foiled in all their attempts to ameliorate their condition, the English Catholics were ready to give ear to the most dangerous counsels. And now it was that the idea of destroying at one fatal blow King, Lords, and Commons, through the agency of gunpowder, began to assume a definite shape in the minds of some of the more desperate of the party. At this time Robert Catesby, who was the representative of one of the oldest families in England, and who, during the former reign, had entered warmly into the Earl of Essex's insurrection, John Wright, a scion of the Wrights of Plowland in Holderness, and Thomas Winter, who came of a line that had held estates in Worcestershire since the wars of the Roses, were frequently in the habit of meeting together at Lambeth, to discuss the fortunes and future of their Church. On one of these occasions Catesby took Winter aside and told him that 'he had bethought him of a way at one instant to deliver them from all their bonds, and without any foreign help to replant again the Catholic religion.' On being pressed to explain his meaning, he answered that 'his plan was to blow up the Parliament House with gunpowder; for,' added he, 'in that place they have

done us all the mischief, and perchance God hath designed that place for their punishment.' Winter, taken aback at the suggestion of so terrible a deed, made objections. 'True it was,' he said, 'that this struck at the root, and would breed a confusion fit to beget new alterations; but if it should not take effect, the scandal would be so great which the Catholic religion might thereby sustain, as not only their enemies but their friends also would, with good reason, condemn them.' Catesby shortly replied that 'the nature of the disease required so sharp a remedy.' Then he bluntly asked if Winter would consent to join with him. At once Winter answered that, 'in this or what else soever, if Catesby resolved upon it, he would venture his life.'

It was however now agreed that, if possible, the ends of the conspirators should be attained by all peaceful means. Accordingly, Catesby recommended Winter to cross over to Flanders, and there see Velasco, the Constable of Castile, then on his way to England to conclude a peace between James and the King of Spain, and to beg the Constable to use his efforts with the King of England to have the penal laws against Catholics repealed. This suggestion was at once adopted, and Winter hastily proceeded to Bergen, where he had an interview with Velasco. The discreet Constable received him courteously, but dismissed him with platitudes. The King of Spain, he said, entertained the most friendly feelings towards the Catholics of England; he himself personally much regretted the painful position in which they were placed, but he could not definitely promise that in the

treaty about to be signed he could specially stipulate for the redress of their grievances; he would however see what could be done. This answer was not satisfactory to Winter, and finding from the English Catholics then in Flanders that Spain had no intention of actively interesting herself on behalf of the Catholic cause in England, he returned home accompanied by one Guido Fawkes, who had been recommended to him by the Flemish priests as a 'fit and resolute man for the execution of the enterprise.'¹

Guido Fawkes, whose name history will ever hand down as the chief mover in the plot, was sprung from a respectable Yorkshire family. In his examination² he admits that he was born in the city of York, and that his father was one Edward Fawkes, a notary, who has now been identified with the Edward Fawkes who held the office of 'registrar and advocate of the Consistory Court of the Cathedral Church of York,' and who was buried in the Cathedral Church, January 17, 1578. His parents being Protestants, Guido was brought up in the faith of the Church of England and educated in a free school near York. On the death of Edward Fawkes the widow married a very devoted Catholic, and we may therefore conclude that the future conspirator was made a convert to his step-father's religion. Sir William Waad, the Lieutenant of the Tower, writes to Lord Salisbury, after

¹ *State Papers, Domestic.* Examination of Thomas Winter, January, 1606. The Papers relating to the Plot, though calendared by Mrs. Green have been separated from the Domestic Series of State Papers, and are now bound up in two volumes.

² *Ibid.* November 7, 1605.

the discovery of the plot,¹ that 'Fawkes' mother is still alive, and married to Foster, an obstinate recusant, and he hath a brother in one of the Inns of Court. John and Christopher Wright were schoolfellows of Fawkes and neighbours' children. Tesmond the Jesuit was at that time schoolfellow also with them; so as this crew have been brought up together.' After having spent the 'small living' left him by his father, Guido enlisted in the Spanish army in Flanders, and was present at the capture of Calais by the Archduke Albert in 1598. His devotion to the Catholic cause, his high courage, and in an age of dissoluteness his purity of life, soon caused him to be looked upon as one of the pillars of the party. He had been sent on more than one mission to Spain to obtain help for his brethren in England, and those who knew him felt assured that the interests of their Church could not be entrusted to safer hands. He is described by Father Greenway as 'a man of great piety, of exemplary temperance, of mild and cheerful demeanour, an enemy of broils and disputes, a faithful friend, and remarkable for his punctual attendance upon religious observances.' When in Flanders, we are told that his society was 'sought by all the most distinguished in the Archduke's camp for nobility and virtue.' Such was the dangerous enthusiast who was now to play a prominent part in the conspiracy then being matured in the unscrupulous brain of Catesby. Vice and fanaticism often tread the same path to reach their goal.

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, December 8, 1605.

On arriving in London, Winter, accompanied by Fawkes, went to see Catesby at his lodgings. There he met Percy and Wright. It was evident to the little band that, deceived by James and deserted by Spain, the English Catholics, if they wished to free themselves from the galling restrictions by which they were surrounded, would have solely to rely upon their own energies and resources. They discussed their position and the future before them. 'Are we always to talk,' said Percy angrily, 'and never to do anything?' Catesby took him aside and whispered in his ear that he knew what should be done, but before he divulged his views it was necessary that every one should be bound by a solemn oath of secrecy. Percy readily agreed, and on the meeting breaking up it was arranged that they should all assemble in a few days at a house in the fields beyond St. Clement's Inn. At the time appointed the conspirators came together; the only addition to their number being Father Gerard, a Jesuit priest. The moment they had assembled, and without any conversation taking place, Father Gerard stood in their midst and administered the oath to each, beginning with Catesby and ending with Fawkes. 'You shall swear,' he said, 'by the Blessed Trinity, and by the Sacrament you now propose to receive, never to disclose directly or indirectly, by word or circumstance, the matter that shall be proposed to you to keep secret, nor desist from the execution thereof until the rest shall give you leave.' The oath taken, all 'kneeling down upon their knees with their hands laid upon a primer,' Catesby requested Gerard to quit the room

whilst he made his project known. He then stated that he proposed, when the King went in state to the House of Lords, to blow up the Parliament House with gunpowder. The scheme met with the approval of his hearers, and after a brief discussion as to the course that was to be pursued they adjourned to an upper room, where they heard mass and received the Sacrament from the Jesuit father.¹

The plan of the plot, once adopted, was quickly put into execution. A house adjoining the Parliament House which happened to be vacant was taken by Percy, and there the conspirators daily met. It was proposed that a mine should be constructed from the cellar of this house through the wall of the Parliament House, and that a quantity of gunpowder and combustibles should be stored in the vault of the House of Lords. At the same time a house was rented in Lambeth where wood and timber could be deposited, to be ferried across the river to Westminster in small quantities so as not to excite suspicion. Fawkes,

¹ That Gerard was ignorant of the plot, see Examination of Fawkes, November 9, 1605: 'Gerard, the Jesuit, gave them the Sacrament, to confirm their oath of secrecy, *but knew not their purpose*;' also Examination of Winter, January 9, 1606, Gerard, *alias* Lee: 'The priest gave them the Sacrament afterwards, *but knew not of the plot.*' The Jesuits at this time were in the habit of assuming several pseudonyms. The following occur amongst the State Papers:—

Henry Garnet	<i>alias</i>	Walley, Darcy, Farmer, and Meaze.
Edward Oldcorne	"	Hall, Vincent, Parker.
Nicholas Owen	"	Andrews, Littlejohn, Draper.
Oswald Greenway	"	Greenwell, Tesmond.
John Gerard	"	Brook, Staunton, Lee.
Thomas Strange	"	Anderson.

being unknown in London, kept the keys and acted as Percy's servant, under the name of Johnson. The frequent prorogation of Parliament allowed the conspirators ample time to mature their schemes and to proceed with their mining operations. These latter were more arduous than had been expected. The wall which separated the house from the Parliament Chamber was a stout piece of masonry three yards in thickness, and required all the efforts of the plotters to make any impression upon it. All day they worked with their pickaxes, and at night removed the rubbish into the garden behind the house, strewing it about and then covering it with turf. With the exception of Fawkes, who wore a porter's dress over his clothes, and passed for a servant taking care of a house in the absence of its master, none of the conspirators were ever seen at the windows, but lived in strict seclusion in the basement. It was with no little pride that Guido Fawkes remembered that those who were then spending their days in arduous toil and depressing isolation were men of ancient race working like the lowest for the sake of Holy Mother Church. 'All,' he afterwards avowed,¹ 'were gentlemen of name and blood, and not any was employed in or about this action—no, not so much as in digging and mining—that was not a gentleman. And while the others wrought, I stood as sentinel to descry any man that came near; and when any man came near to the place, upon warning given by me

¹ *State Papers, Domestic.* Examination of Guy Fawkes, November 8, 1605.

they eased until they had again notice from me to proceed ; and we lay in the house and had shot and powder, and we all resolved to die in that place before we yielded or were taken.'

An accidental circumstance, which seemed as if fortune at first was propitious to the plot, was now to relieve the conspirators from much of this toil. One morning, whilst at work as usual upon the wall, a loud grating noise was suddenly heard above their heads. The men suspended their labours and kept dead silence, fearing that at last all had been discovered. The noise continued, and Fawkes was sent upstairs to ascertain, if he could, the cause. To his delight he found that a cellar immediately below the House of Lords was being emptied of coals, and that the sound which had so startled them was owing to this circumstance. In the character of Percy's servant Fawkes approached the coal-merchant, whose name was Bright, and asked him if he was disposed to let the cellar, as his master was in want of one to store his own coals and wood. Bright replied that the cellar would shortly be vacant, and that he had no objection to Mr. Percy renting it from him. Such an arrangement was of the greatest service to the conspirators. There was now no necessity to continue boring through the wall which separated them from the Parliament House, for the cellar they were about to hire was a large vault, dry and dark, directly below the House of Lords, and exactly suited to the fell purpose they had in view. Terms were soon settled between Percy and Bright, and within a month the

vault was filled with barrels of powder hidden in hampers, iron bars and tools to 'make the breach the greater,' and the whole covered with faggots and billets of wood. The better to conceal the purpose for which the cellar was used, a quantity of lumber was thrown carelessly about. It was now May, and Parliament did not meet till the first week of October. The preparations complete, the conspirators agreed to part company during the months that intervened, so as not to excite suspicion by being seen together. It was considered advisable that Fawkes should make London his head-quarters, and we now learn that he lodged at a Mrs. Woodhouse, 'at the back of St. Clement's Church.' His landlady does not appear to have been impressed in his favour. 'She disliked him,' she said, 'suspecting him to be a priest; he was tall, with brown hair, auburn beard, and had plenty of money.' Here he carried on an active correspondence with Catesby, Percy, Winter, and the two Wrights.¹

When men meet together to carry out some terrible deed, it is seldom that the secret is only confined to the originators of the scheme. As the plot thickens, and success becomes more and more probable, other agencies have to be introduced, and the band of conspirators has to increase its numbers. This was now the case with the designers of the Powder Plot. One by one the original five had to admit others into their confidence, until the heads of many were compromised in the matter. First, it had been necessary to

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, November 7, 1605.

obtain further assistance for the mining of the party-wall, and Robert Keyes, the son of the vicar of Stavelly in Derbyshire, and Christopher, the brother of John Wright, had the oath administered to them and were duly enrolled members of the dangerous fraternity. Then John Grant, of Norbrook, near Warwick; Robert, the eldest brother of Thomas Winter; and Thomas Bates, a servant of Catesby, were sworn as confederates. As money was an important element in the undertaking to bring it to a successful issue, Catesby and Percy were of opinion that the secret should be divulged to some of the wealthy English Catholics, who should be asked to contribute funds towards the object in view. Accordingly, Sir Everard Digby, of Tilton and Drystoke, in Rutlandshire; Ambrose Rookwood, of Coldham Hall, in Suffolk; and Francis Tresham, the eldest son of Sir Thomas Tresham, and a relative of Catesby's—all zealous Catholics and men of large estate—took the oath and became adherents to the cause. Thus the ranks of the conspirators had been swelled from five to thirteen, not including certain persons who had been sent on foreign missions, who were supposed to be, if not entirely, at least partly, in the secret.

As the dread day for the meeting of Parliament approached, the plans of future operations were discussed and finally arranged. The King and the Prince of Wales, it was concluded, would perish in the explosion. The Duke of York, afterwards Charles the First, it was supposed, would not accompany his father, and to Percy, therefore, was entrusted the task of securing the lad and carrying him off

in safety to be subsequently proclaimed King. Should the Duke not be found, then the Princess Elizabeth, who was under the care of Lord Harrington at Coventry, was to be surprised and taken off instead of her brother. Warwickshire was to be the place of general rendezvous. Arms and ammunition were stored up in the houses of various conspirators in the midland counties, while Catesby, under pretence of uniting with the levies then being collected in England for service in Flanders, had raised a troop of three hundred horse to meet any resistance which might be offered by the Government after the execution of the plot.¹ Thus, as matters had been arranged, the Parliament House was to be wrecked; the King, the heir apparent, and a large portion of the aristocracy were to be suddenly sent into eternity; a new sovereign was to be elected; the Protestants were to be demolished, and all Catholic grievances consequently redressed. The mine had been laid, it was only necessary now to fire it.

Parliament had been prorogued from the third of October to the fifth of November. As the day came nearer and nearer for the perpetration of the awful act, a natural feeling of humanity impressed itself upon the members in the secret of the conspiracy. Every man amongst them knew that within a few days a terrible slaughter was about to be effected, that in the chamber above the murderous vault, with its powder and its faggots, there would assemble those

¹ *State Papers, Domestic.* Examination of Guy Fawkes, November 8, 1605; also examination of Thomas Winter, January 17, 1606.

favourable to the Catholic cause as well as those hostile to it ; yet in the havoc of the explosion no distinction could be made, and both friend and foe would have to suffer the doom of sudden death. There was not one of the conspirators but had some friend he was anxious to save, and the question had often been debated amongst them how they could impart intelligence to those in whom they were interested without sacrificing the success of the plot. How could they give warning without divulging their secret ? Tresham was 'exceeding earnest' to advise Lords Stourton and Mounteagle, who had married his sisters, to absent themselves from the opening of Parliament ; Keyes was anxious to save his friend and patron, Lord Mordaunt ; Fawkes himself was interested in the fate of Lord Montague ; whilst Percy strongly interceded on behalf of the Earl of Northumberland and of the young Lord Arundel. But the stern, hard Catesby turned a deaf ear to all entreaties, and refused to be moved.

'Rather than the project should not take effect,' he cried, 'if they were as dear unto me as mine own son, they must also be blown up.' He, however, assured his colleagues that most of the Catholic peers would not attend the meeting of Parliament, and that 'tricks should be put upon them to that end.' 'Assure yourself,' he said to Digby, 'that such of the nobility as are worth saving shall be preserved and yet know not of the matter.' His advice was accepted, for all feared that any other course was too dangerous to be adopted. 'We durst not forewarn them,' said Fawkes afterwards, 'for fear we should be discovered ; we meant principally to have

respected our own safety, and would have prayed for them. It was, however, agreed that if anyone amongst them saw his way to warn a friend on 'general grounds' to absent himself on the occasion, he would be justified in so doing.¹

This permission was to be fully availed of. William Parker, Lord Mounteagle, was one of the few Catholics who then enjoyed the full favour of the Court. During the last reign he had become intimate with Catesby and Winter, and had been engaged in the rebellion of the Earl of Essex, for which he had been fined and imprisoned. He had also been one of those who had invited the King of Spain to invade England for the preservation of Catholic interests. On the accession of James, Mounteagle forsook his plotting courses, posed as a loyal adherent of the King, and became one of the most prominent of those 'tame ducks' used by the Court to 'decoy the wild ones.' He was regarded by the English Catholics as the man above all others who could obtain redress for their grievances, if redress were possible.² One evening—it was on Saturday, October 26—whilst Lord Mounteagle was at supper at his house at Hoxton, a letter was brought in to

¹ *State Papers, Domestic.* Examination of Digby, December 2; of Keyes, November 30; and of Fawkes, November 16, 1605.

² *Ibid.* Examination of Thomas Winter, November 25, and of Francis Tresham, November 29, 1605. In these originals great care has been taken to conceal the name of Mounteagle. In the examination of Winter the name of Mounteagle is half scratched out and half pasted over with paper. In the examination of Tresham his name is hidden by a slip of paper being pasted over it. These are the only two examinations amongst the State Papers in which the name of Mounteagle appears.

him. It had been handed to one of the pages by a man whose face was closely muffled up, with instructions to deliver the paper at once to his master, as it contained matters of importance. The letter ran as follows :—

‘ My lord out of the love i beare to some of your friends i have a caer of your preservacion therefore i would advyse youe as youe tender your lyf to devyse some excuse to shift of your attendance at this parleament for god and man hathe concurred to punishe the wickednes of this tyme and thinke not slightlye of this advertisment but retyere youre self into youre countri wheare youe maye expect the event in safti for thowghe there be no apparence of anni stir yet i saye they shall receyve a terrible blowe this parleament and yet they shall not seie who hurts them this councel is not to be contemned because it maye do youe good and can do youe no harme for the dangere is passed as soon as you have burnt the letter and i hope god will give youe the grace to mak good use of it to whose holy proteccion i commend youe.’¹

Who wrote this letter? It has been attributed to Mrs. Abington, the sister of Lord Mounteagle, and wife of Thomas Abington, of Henlip, Worcestershire, one of the most zealous of the English Catholics. But the evidence we possess on the subject distinctly states that neither Mr. Abington nor his wife were acquainted with the plot until informed of its failure by Garnet, when they refused to join the rising of

¹ This letter is amongst the *Gunpowder Plot Papers*. It is written in Roman hand, without capital letters or punctuation. It is addressed—‘To the right honourable the lord mowteagle.’

the Catholics.¹ The authorship of this letter has also been ascribed to Anne Vaux, the daughter of Lord Vaux, and devoted friend (Protestant scandal hints at a closer relationship) of Father Garnet; but such a statement is unsupported by any testimony worthy of credence. There can be little doubt, however, that the sender, if not the writer, of the letter was Francis Tresham. Everything points him out as the agent. He was known to be treacherous and unprincipled; he had always been a lukewarm adherent of the plot, and consequently regarded with suspicion by his colleagues; he had expressed himself most anxious to save the life of Mounteagle; latterly he had been absent from the proceedings of the conspirators; and on the failure of the plot he was treated with suspicious leniency by the Government. At the same time, it is hardly to be credited that this letter was the first intimation either Mounteagle or the Council obtained of the existence of such a conspiracy. No one not in the secret could guess from its contents what was about to occur; it was, as Lord Salisbury expressed it, 'too loose an advertisement for any wise man to take alarm at, and absent himself from Parliament.' There can be little doubt but that the Government were well acquainted throughout with the movements of the conspirators, and that they made use of Tresham's disclosure simply, as Father Greenway suggests, to hide the true source from which their information had been derived.

¹ *State Papers, Domestic.* Examination of Edward Oldeorne, *alias* Hall, March 6, 1606.

The probable solution of the discovery is as follows : The English Jesuits at Rome were well aware of the existence of the plot ; the French spies at Rome heard of it, and communicated it to their government ; then France, fearful lest the fate of James and the success of the conspirators should place England in the power of Spain, secretly informed the Council of what was in store for them. In the Memoirs of the Duke of Sully there are frequent allusions to the sudden blow which the Catholics are preparing against England. A recent discovery also confirms this view. Among the Cecil Papers, lately examined at Hatfield, there is this letter, which lacks both signature and address : ¹—

‘ Who so evar finds this box of letars let him carry it to the King’s Majesty ; my Master litel thinks I know of this, but in rydinge with him that browt the letar to my Master to a Katholyk gentleman’s hows anward of his way into Lincolnshire he told me all his purpose and what he ment to do ; and he being a priest absolved me and made me swear never to reveal it to any man. I confess myself a Katholyk and do hate the Protestant religion with my hart and yet I detest to consent either to murder or treason. I have blottyd out sartyn names in the letars because I wold not have either my Master or ane of his friends trobyl aboute this ; for by his means I was made a good Katholyk ; and I wold to God the King war a good Katholyk that is all the harm I wish hym ; and let him take heed what petitions or supplications he taks of ane man ; and I hop this will be found by som that will give it to the King, it may

¹ *Third Report Hist. MSS. Commission*, vol. iv. p. 148.

do him good one day. I mean not to come to my Master any more, but will return unto my country from whens I came. As for my name and country I counsel that; and God make the King a good Katholyk; and let Sir Robert Cecil and My Lord Chief Justice look to themselves.'

The events which immediately followed upon the despatch of the letter to Mounteagle are the common facts of history, and the State Papers fail to reveal much that is new. The vaults below the Parliament House were examined by the Lord Chamberlain, who purposely deferred the inspection till the day before the meeting of the Chambers. The coals and faggots stored up in the vault were observed, and at the same time Fawkes was seen, standing in a dark corner, guarding his treasures. So vast a supply of fuel for a house seldom occupied seemed somewhat suspicious, and on the Lord Chamberlain making his report to the King it was resolved that a further examination should take place. Not to create alarm, the inspection was entrusted to Sir Thomas Knevet, a magistrate of Westminster, under pretence of making a general search in the houses and cellars in the neighbourhood for certain stuffs belonging to the King's wardrobe. At midnight, on the eve of the now memorable fifth of November, Sir Thomas with his assistants made a sudden descent upon the house. Fawkes, having finished his day's work, was in the act of shutting the door. He was detained whilst the magistrate visited the cellar. Here the barrels of powder hidden by the faggots, the bars of iron, and the coals at once revealed the nature of the plot. Fawkes was

arrested, pinioned, and searched; slow matches and touch-wood were found upon his person. In a corner of the cellar was a dark lantern, the light still burning in it. Now that he had been caught red-handed, and all evasion was fruitless, the boldness of the man came out. Without hesitation, Fawkes avowed to Sir Thomas the ends he had in view, and declared that 'if he had happened to be within the house when he took him, he would not have failed to have blown him up, house, himself, and all.'

Under a strong guard the prisoner was marched off at once to Whitehall, there to be examined personally by the King. The Royal bedchamber was filled with members of the Council, and in the middle of the room, seated on a chair, was James. Calm, and with a lofty dignity, the conspirator faced his judges. In his own eyes he had done what was right, and he was bold with the courage of the man whose conscience completely acquits him. Question after question was put to him, often hurriedly and passionately, yet he never permitted his temper to be ruffled out of its quiet, haughty composure. His name, he answered, was John Johnson, and he was a servant of Thomas Percy. It was quite true that whilst the Upper House was sitting he meant to have fired the mine below, and escape before the powder had been ignited. Had he not been seized, he would have blown up King, lords, bishops, and all who had been in the chamber.

'Why would you have killed me?' asked the King.

'Because you are excommunicated by the Pope.'

‘How so?’ said James.

‘Maunday Thursday the Pope excommunicates all heretics who are not of the Church of Rome. You are within the same excommunication.’

He was then asked who were privy to the conspiracy, but refused to accuse any of his friends. After further questions had been put to him, several of which he declined to answer, he was sent with a guard to the Tower.

It had been arranged that the conspirators, after the explosion, should hasten to Dunchurch, where Sir Everard Digby, under cover of a meet on Dunsmore Heath, was to assemble a large party friendly to the Catholic cause. Catesby and John Wright were on their way thither the afternoon of the day on which Fawkes had been apprehended. At Brickhill they were joined by Keyes, Rookwood, Percy, and Christopher Wright, who now informed them of the arrest of Fawkes, when they rode for dear life into Warwickshire. At Dunchurch they met the rest of their number, but after a brief stay it was considered advisable to ride through the counties of Warwick, Worcester, and Stafford, into Wales, exciting the Catholic gentry to join them as they went along. Their efforts were, however, useless. The Catholics hounded them from their doors, and reproached them for having dragged their cause through the mire by their infamous enterprise. ‘Not one man,’ says Sir Everard in his examination,¹ ‘came to take our part, though we had expected so many.’ At Holbeach, in

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, December 2, 1605.

Staffordshire, the dejected band had to defend themselves against the county, which had been raised from all quarters, and armed by the sheriff. Surrounded by the enemy, the conspirators saw that escape was out of the question, and prepared to sell their lives as dearly as possible. Yet even this consolation was denied them. Some powder, which Catesby and Rookwood were drying upon a platter over a fire, blew up with a tremendous explosion. Several of the party were severely burned, and Catesby fell down as dead. Disabled and discouraged, the conspirators were powerless to resist their pursuers. They were summoned to lay down their arms and surrender. They scornfully refused. An assault was now made upon the gates of the courtyard of the house in which they had assembled. Two shots from a cross-bow mortally wounded both the Wrights. Catesby and Percy, standing back to back, were shot through the body, and shortly afterwards died of their wounds. Winter was disabled by an arrow penetrating his arm. Rookwood was senseless from a thrust from a pike. At last their assailants burst into the courtyard, beat down all resistance, and made the rest of the party prisoners. They were conveyed to London, and committed to the custody of Sir William Waad, the Governor of the Tower. Within a week of the discovery of the plot, all the chief conspirators, excepting those who had perished at Holbeach, were in safe confinement.

The examination of the prisoners was at once proceeded with. Fawkes, as chief culprit, had to undergo repeated examinations, not only before the Commissioners named by

the King from the Privy Council, but before Lord Chief Justice Popham, Sir Edward Coke, and Sir William Waad.¹ At first he refused to give his real name, but a letter directed to him being found in his clothes, he owned that he had assumed the name of John Johnson for purposes of concealment, and that he was called Guido Fawkes. He now candidly admitted his regret at having been concerned in the plot, 'for he perceived that God did not concur with it;' still he had acted for the best, for ever since 'he undertook that action, he did every day pray to God he might perform that which might be for the advancement of the Catholic faith and the saving of his own soul.' As close confinement began to soften his feelings, he became more amenable to the wishes of his examiners. He furnished a full account of the history of the plot, how it had been revealed to him eighteen months ago by an Englishman in the Low Countries; how he had prepared the vault; how they had resolved to surprise the Princess Elizabeth and make her Queen in the absence of Prince Charles; how they had prepared a proclamation in her name against the union of the two kingdoms, and in justification of their act; how they would have taken the Princess Mary, but knew not how; and how they had sent arms and ammunition into Warwickshire.²

Yet no threats nor persuasion could induce him to disclose a single name which had been connected with the plot. 'He

¹ His examinations and declarations amongst the State Papers are November 5, 6 (two), 7, 8, 9, and 16, 1605; January 9, 20, and 26, 1606.

² *State Papers, Domestic*, November 8, 1605.

confineth all things of himself,' writes Lord Salisbury, 'and denieth not to have some partners in this particular practice, yet could no threatening of torture draw from him any other language than this—that he is ready to die, and rather wisheth ten thousand deaths than willingly to accuse his master or any other.' When pressed by Sir William Waad that it was useless for him to conceal the names of his colleagues, since their flight had already revealed them, Fawkes quietly replied, 'If that be so, it will be superfluous for me to declare them, seeing by that circumstance they have named themselves.' Such obstinacy was not to be permitted, for we must remember that at this time the fugitive conspirators were still at large, and therefore, since persuasion had failed, it was necessary to have recourse to severity. On the appointment of the Commissioners, and with special reference to Guy Fawkes, the King had written to them in his own hand, 'The gentler tortours are to be first usid unto him *et sic per gradus ad ima tenditur*, and so God speede youre goode worke.'¹ There can be no doubt but that torture was now applied to the unhappy man, and that the rack was the means of obtaining disclosures which otherwise would not have been revealed. On November 9, Fawkes made a declaration, in which he gave the names of all the sworn conspirators without reserve. This document is amongst the pages of the 'Gunpowder Plot Book,' and is entitled 'The Declaration of Guido Fawkes, taken the 9th day of November, and subscribed by him on the 10th day, acknowledged before the

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, November 6, 1605.

Lords Commissioners.' It is subscribed in a tremulous hand 'Guido,' as if the conspirator had put pen to paper immediately after being released from torture, and had fainted before completing his signature. The agonies of the rack were no doubt unbearable, but Fawkes now heard for the first time of the fate of his friends at Holbeach, and he may have thought it useless to suffer for the concealment of facts which were no longer secret.¹

On the morning of January 26, 1606, there entered a barge moored at the steps of the Tower, Guy Fawkes, the brothers Winter, Ambrose Rookwood, John Grant, Robert Keyes, and Thomas Bates. From the Tower the barge proceeded to Westminster. The vast hall was crowded with spectators, for this was to be the first day of the trial of the notorious prisoners. Hidden by a screen from the audience were the King, the Queen, and the Prince of Wales. Seated on the bench were the Lords Commissioners, the Earls of Nottingham, Suffolk, Worcester, Devonshire, Northampton, and Salisbury; the Lord Chief Justice of England, Sir John Popham; the Lord Chief Baron, Sir Thomas Fleming; and Sir Thomas Walmisley, and Sir Peter Warburton, Justices of the Court of Common Pleas. Confronting their judges, on a scaffold, stood the prisoners. To the usual question of the

¹ That Fawkes was racked is certain. Amongst the State Papers is a document dated February 25, 1606, in which these words occur: 'Johnson has been on the rack for three hours, *whereas Fawkes confessed after being racked for half an hour.*' Again, Thomas Philipps, writing, December, 1605, to Hugh Owen, says: 'Fawkes confessed nothing the first racking, but did so when told he must come to it again and again from day to day till he should have delivered his whole knowledge.'

Clerk of Arraigns, in spite of the confessions wrung from them in the Tower, each conspirator as he was asked pleaded not guilty.

The Attorney-General, Sir Edward Coke, now rose up on behalf of the Crown, to accuse the prisoners of high treason. He had been instructed by Lord Salisbury what to say. He was to show that the practices of the conspirators 'began on the Queen's death and before the severe laws against the Catholics.' He was to disclaim that any of the accused wrote the letter which was the first ground of discovery. Thirdly, he was to praise the conduct of Mounteagle, and show 'how sincerely he dealt and how fortunately it proved that he was the instrument of so great a blessing as this was.' Acting upon these instructions, the Attorney-General, after having enlarged upon the enormity of 'this treason,' proceeded to relate the previous conspiracies into which several of the prisoners had entered, declaring that all of them had been 'planted and watered' by the Jesuits and the English Catholics. He contrasted the mildness of the laws passed against the Catholics with the severity of the proceedings against the Protestants under Mary. He praised the lenity of James, who had been willing to grant complete toleration until compelled to change his policy by the treasonable conduct of the Catholics, and especially of the priests. He then sketched the history of the plot, and concluded that men guilty of so monstrous a conspiracy were undeserving of mercy, and justly merited the severest punishment the law allowed. The confessions of the prisoners were now read,

and after a brief summing up from the Lord Chief Justice, a verdict was brought in finding all the conspirators guilty.

Sir Everard Digby was separately arraigned. He pleaded guilty ; he had been actuated, he said, by a desire to restore the Catholic religion, but he confessed that he deserved the severest punishment and the vilest death. The Commissioners gravely lectured him upon his conduct, declined to listen to his petition on behalf of his estate, wife and children, and he, with the rest, was adjudged guilty of high treason. Sentence of death was now passed upon the eight condemned men, and they were then rowed back to the Tower.

Three days after the trial the gates of the Tower again opened, and there appeared Digby, Robert Winter, John Grant, and Thomas Bates. They were pinioned and bound to hurdles which were placed on sledges. A scaffold had been erected at the western end of St. Paul's churchyard, and thither, amid the execrations of the mob, the unhappy men were drawn. All met their fate with courage, admitting the justice of their sentence, and declaring that they died true sons of the Catholic Church. This was on the Thursday ; the day following, Guy Fawkes, Thomas Winter, Ambrose Rookwood, and Robert Keyes, were drawn from the Tower to the old Palace at Westminster. The last to suffer was Fawkes. He was so enfeebled by sickness and torture, that he had to be helped up the ladder. He spoke only a few words to the crowd ; he expressed his regret for the crime of which he had been guilty, and begged the King and his country to forgive

him his bloody intent. Then he placed himself in the hands of the executioner and was launched into eternity.

The Judas of the band was spared the gallows. Though his colleagues had been arrested, Tresham was permitted to remain at large until several days after the discovery of the plot. This partial leniency certainly favours the conjecture that the Government were under obligations to him. On his arrest he made a clean breast of his connection with the plotters and their work. He stated that Catesby had informed him of the conspiracy, that he had strongly discouraged it, but finding that all opposition was in vain, he had begged that the execution of the plot should be deferred to the end of the session of Parliament, and that all engaged in it should obtain safety in the Low Countries. His companions once out of the country, he had intended, he said, to reveal the plot to the Government.¹ He also stated that Mounteagle and Catesby, as well as Fathers Greenway and Garnet, were privy to Winter's mission to the King of Spain. Shortly after this confession Tresham was attacked by a dangerous malady, and his life was despaired of. A few hours before his death he dictated a declaration in which he retracted in the most solemn manner that part of his statement implicating Father Garnet in the mission of Winter to Spain. This declaration he signed, and begged his wife to 'deliver it with her own hands to the Earl of Salisbury.'² He died December 23, 1605.

¹ *State Papers, Domestic.* Examinations of Francis Tresham. November 13 and 29, 1605.

² *Ibid.* December 22, 1605. See also Sir E. Coke to Salisbury, March 24, 1606.

We now come to the question which has long been a subject of dispute between Protestants and Catholics—how far the Jesuit priests, Greenway and Gerard, and Garnet, the provincial of the Jesuits in England, were cognisant of the plot. All the chief conspirators in their different examinations before the Commissioners strongly denied that the priests were in their confidence.¹ The only one who accused them was Bates. And who was Bates? He was an old servant of Catesby, who, from being employed by his master about the house at Westminster, had obtained some inkling of the plot. It was therefore thought more prudent by the conspirators to let him into the secret and bind him by the oath, than to allow him to remain a free agent, and perhaps imperil the undertaking by the disclosures he might be tempted to reveal. According to Father Greenway, Bates 'was a man of mean station who had been much persecuted on account of religion.' Once, in the presence of the Commissioners, the late servant of Catesby made the most damaging disclosures. He said that after having taken the oath he confessed to Father Greenway the nature of the conspiracy in which Catesby and others were engaged; that Greenway then bade him be 'secret in that which his master had imparted to him, because it was for a good cause, and that he was to tell no other priest of it; saying moreover that it was not dangerous to him, nor any offence to conceal it.' Absolution was then given him, and he received the

¹ See *Examinations of Fawkes and Thomas Winter*, November 9, 1605.

Sacrament in the presence of Catesby and Thomas Winter.¹ This assertion Greenway solemnly denied. Upon his salvation he declared that Bates never spoke one word to him as to the plot, either in or out of confession. Six weeks later, further revelations were disclosed. Bates appeared before the Commissioners, and as in his first examination he had compromised the character of Greenway, so now, in his second examination, his evidence was most prejudicial to the character of Garnet. He declared that after the flight of the conspirators he had been sent to Garnet with a letter from Sir Everard Digby, asking advice from the priest; that Garnet read the letter aloud in the presence of Bates, and Greenway coming into the room, he cried, 'They would have blown up the Parliament House, and were discovered, and we are utterly undone;' that Greenway then said, 'There was no tarrying for himself and Garnet;' and that they conferred together, meditating flight.²

These confessions obtained every credence from the Council, and a proclamation was issued for the apprehension of Greenway and Garnet, with other Jesuit priests, whilst a sweeping bill of attainder was introduced into Parliament confiscating the property of various suspected Catholics. Greenway and Gerard managed to effect their escape to the continent, but Garnet, who was in hiding at Handlip Hall, the seat of Mr. Abington, failed to defeat the strict search

¹ *State Papers, Domestic.* Examination of Thomas Bates, December 4, 1605.

² *Ibid.* January 13, 1606.

made by Sir Henry Bromley throughout the mansion, and was captured in a cell, having been for days half-starved, and looking, as he said, more like a ghost than a man. He was conveyed to London, lodged in the Gatehouse, and in a few days was brought before the Privy Council. His examination was more searching and more frequent than that of any of the other conspirators.¹ At first Garnet declared that he had no knowledge of the plot, and refused to inculcate any of his colleagues; but as he saw the evidence against him becoming more and more difficult to rebut, he ended by imparting to his judges the true nature of his position. Briefly, the substance of his examinations was that he had derived his knowledge of the plot from Catesby and Greenway, under the seal of sacramental confession, so that in religion and conscience his lips were entirely closed. He was brought to trial March 28, 1606, and charged with 'compassing the death of the King and the heir apparent, and with a design to subvert the government and the true worship of God established in England, to excite rebellion against the King, to procure foreigners to invade the realm, and to levy war against the King.' He defended himself with courage and ability, but the jury, after a brief deliberation of a quarter of an hour, returned a verdict of guilty, and the accused was sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered.

¹ His examinations and declarations among the State Papers are February 13; March 5, 6, 12, 13, 14, 23, 26, 29; April 1, 4, 25, and 28, 1606. The report of his conversations with Hall, which were overheard, February 23 and 25, and March 2, 1606; and as to his letters which were intercepted, March 3 and 4, and April 2, 3, and 21, 1606.

During the interval that was now to elapse between the sentence and the execution, the condemned man occupied himself in justifying the theory of equivocation, and in admitting the heinous character of the crime for which he was about to suffer. 'I have written a detestation of that action for the King to see,' he says in one of his intercepted letters to his devoted friend Anne Vaux,¹ 'and I acknowledge myself not to die a victorious martyr, but a penitent thief, as I hope I shall do; and so will I say at the execution, whatever others have said or held before.' The following day he sent to the Council, for the perusal of the King, his 'detestation of that action.'² In this document he freely protested that he held 'the late intention of the powder action to have been altogether unlawful and most horrible;' he acknowledged that he was bound to reveal all knowledge that he had of this or any other treason out of the sacrament of confession; 'and whereas, partly upon hope of prevention, partly for that I would not betray my friend, I did not reveal the general knowledge of Mr. Catesby's intention which I had by him, I do acknowledge myself highly guilty to have offended God, the King's Majesty and estate, and humbly ask of all forgiveness.' He concluded by exhorting all Catholics not to follow his example, and trusted that the King would not visit upon them the burden of his crimes. He

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, April 3, 1606. Indorsed by Sir William Waad, 'Garnet to Mrs. Vaulx, to be published after his death by her and the Jesuytes.'

² *Ibid.* April 4, 1606.

was executed May 3, 1606, on a gibbet erected in St. Paul's Churchyard.¹

The defence of Garnet has given rise to much controversy. It has been said by those learned in the lore of the Roman Church, that even from his own point of view he was not justified in keeping secret a disclosure of a criminal nature, in spite of his knowledge of it having been obtained under the seal of confession. Martin Delrius, a learned Jesuit, in his *Disquisitiones Magicæ*, writes: 'The priest may strongly admonish the persons confessing to abstain from their criminal enterprise, and, if this produce no effect, may suggest to the bishop or the civil magistrate to look carefully for the wolf among their flock, and to guard narrowly the State, or give such other hints as may prevent mischief without revealing the particular confession. . . . For instance, a criminal confesses that he or some other person has placed gunpowder or other combustible matter under a certain house, and that unless this is removed the house will inevitably be blown up, the sovereign killed, and as many as go into or out of the city be destroyed or brought into great danger—in such a case, almost all the learned doctors, with few exceptions, assert that the confessor may reveal it, if he take due care that neither directly nor indirectly he draws into suspicion the particular offence of the person confessing: ' whilst Bellarmine himself, one of the greatest of the authorities of the Roman Church, expressly

¹ For an account of his execution, see narrative of an eye witness, *State Papers, Domestic*, May 3, 1606.

lays down the doctrine that 'it is lawful for a priest to break the seal of confession, in order to avert a great calamity.'¹

But be this as it may, can it be really credited that Garnet derived his knowledge of the Gunpowder Plot solely from revelations in the confessional? His own evidence contradicts such a belief. In his letter to the King of April 4 he admits that he had offended God as well as the King, 'in not having revealed the general knowledge of Catesby's intention which he had by him.' He therefore owns to a general knowledge of the plot. There can be little doubt but that Garnet was throughout familiar with the proceedings of the conspirators, and constantly advised them as to the course they should follow. He was the bosom friend of Catesby, he was his companion in the different haunts he frequented, and he had been his associate in two previous treasonable actions, one immediately before and the other immediately after the death of Elizabeth. Why, if Catesby had trusted the priest on two former occasions, should he now have withheld his entire confidence on the third? Why do we find Garnet so interested in the mission of Fawkes and others to the continent to obtain foreign aid? Why is he, at the time the explosion should take place, praying specially for the success of the Catholic cause and all prepared for action at the rendezvous in Warwickshire? Why, in his secret conversations with his fellow-prisoner Hall, which were overheard

¹ I am indebted to Mr. Jardine's excellent work for these quotations.

and duly reported, does he never make a statement to the effect that he was ignorant of the details of the plot, and unjustly accused? On the contrary, everything he disclosed on those occasions proves him to have been an active agent in the measures of the conspirators. Looking at the conduct of Garnet throughout, it seems impossible to dispute the verdict of Lord Salisbury: 'All his defence,' said his Lordship, 'was but simple negation; whereas his privity and activity laid together proved him manifestly guilty.'

It may well be that at the very commencement of the plot, when all the plans were in embryo and success was doubtful, the Superior of the English Jesuits was not admitted into the full confidence of the conspirators; but that, as the conspiracy developed and the end it had in view seemed assured, he should have been constantly in the company of its chief promoters without being cognisant of all that was going on, and only, when everything had been completed, let into the secret by means of the confessional, is to insult common sense. 'It is impossible,' writes the acute Mr. Jardine, 'to point out a single ascertained fact either declared by him in his examinations to the Commissioners or to the jury on his trial, or revealed by him afterwards, or urged by his apologists since his death, which is inconsistent with his criminal implication in the plot. On the other hand, all the established and undisputed facts of the transaction are consistent with his being a willing, consenting, and approving confederate, and many of them are wholly unaccounted for by any other supposition. Indeed, this

conclusion appears to be so inevitable, upon a deliberate review of the details of the conspiracy and of the power and influence of the Jesuits at that period, that the doubt and discussion which have occasionally prevailed during two centuries respecting it can only have arisen from the imperfect publication of the facts, and, above all, from the circumstance that the subject has usually been treated in the spirit of political or religious controversy, and not as a question of mere historical criticism.'

Converts have always been remarkable for the venom of their opposition to the creed they have deserted, and for their often unscrupulous ardour in support of their new faith. The history of the Gunpowder Plot is a curious instance of such conduct. With the exception of a few, every man engaged in the conspiracy was not only, as Fawkes proudly boasted, 'a gentleman of name and blood,' but had once been a Protestant. Catesby, though the son of a convert to the Catholic Church, had been brought up as a Protestant, and had married into a Protestant family. John Wright and his brother were converts from the Anglican communion. Guy Fawkes came of a Protestant stock, and in his youth had been a Protestant. Thomas Percy was a convert from Protestantism; so was Sir Everard Digby; so was Robert Keyes, who was the son of an Anglican vicar; Henry Garnet himself did not forsake Protestantism until he had been converted as an undergraduate at Oxford. The Old Catholic element amongst the conspirators was in a minority, and only represented by the brothers Winter,

John Grant of Norbrook, and Ambrose Rookwood. We have no evidence that the mass of the English Catholics approved of the plot ; on the contrary, such testimony as we possess proves their repugnance of it, and their horror that such a deed should have been considered as authorised by the teaching of their Church. The advocates of the conspiracy were the Jesuits—Fawkes and his colleagues were all members of this Order—and between the Jesuits and the secular party at that time there was so bitter a feeling, that it amounted almost to a schism. The majority should not be made to suffer for the crimes of an unscrupulous minority. In accusing the Roman Catholic Church of the guilt of this plot, we should, in all fairness, bear in mind that the conspirators belonged to a body then hostile to the Church, that the Pope knew nothing of the deed that was to be perpetrated, and that we have no evidence of any of the Catholics of the secular party being accomplices in the Gunpowder Treason.

A PERISHED KERNEL.

I think it be true that writers say, that there is no pomegranate so fair or so sound, but may have a *perished kernel*.—SIR FRANCIS BACON *on the Trial of Lady Somerset*.

TOWARDS the autumn of the year 1609 there arrived in London a young Scotchman who, after a few years of dazzling prosperity, was to be cast down to the lowest depths of shame and reproach. Upon our happily limited list of royal favourites the name of Robert Carr occupies a prominent position. Endowed with all the advantages of youth, a handsome figure, a face, if somewhat effeminate, yet full of charm, and possessed of the most winning manners, the lad had quitted his native town of Edinburgh to seek his fortunes at the Court. He was sprung from a good old stock, and his father, we now learn, had been actively engaged in supporting the cause of the unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots; for amongst the State Papers there is a petition addressed to Carr, when he was supreme in the favour of his sovereign, from one James Maitland, soliciting permission to sue in the Scottish courts for revocation of the attainder passed upon William Maitland, of Lethington, for services to the King's mother, and the petitioner apologises for his intrusion

upon the favourite on the ground that 'our fathers were friends, and involved in the same cause and overthrow.'¹

Protected by his kinsman, Lord Hay, young Carr, shortly after his arrival in London, was introduced to the gay company which then daily crowded the galleries and antechambers of Whitehall. It was known that James, who piqued himself upon being indifferent to the fair sex, was strangely susceptible to handsome looks and a graceful figure in young men. Lord Hay, as he took the young adventurer by the hand, and examined his well-knit limbs, his delicate features, his large expressive eyes, and the brilliant complexion, which had a frequent trick of blushing, felt sure that his *protégé* had only to be seen by the King to be at once ingratiated in the royal graces. An opportunity soon offered itself. At a tilting match Lord Hay ordered Carr, according to ancient custom, to carry his shield and device to the King. James was on horseback, and as Carr advanced to perform the duties entrusted to him, he was by a sudden movement of his charger thrown from his saddle, and fell heavily to the ground, breaking his leg. The accident was turned to excellent advantage. James at once dismounted, bent over the lad, and was struck with admiration at the girlish beauty of his features. He gave orders for the young sufferer to be removed to apartments in Whitehall, and to be attended upon by the Court physician. The King, who made friends as quickly as he dropped them, was soon on the most intimate terms with the fascinating Carr.

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, edited by Mrs. Green, July 17, 1613.

He visited him daily, and spent hours in close conversation with him in his chamber. He introduced the Queen to him. He brought him fruit and gifts calculated to cheer the monotony of a sick bed. Finding him indifferently educated, the King, who was never so happy as when instructing others, began to teach him Latin and other subjects, the better to fit him for the honours to which it was intended he should be advanced. A ribald ballad of the time alludes to these attentions :—

Let any poor lad that is handsome and young,
With *parle vous France* and a voice for a song.
But once get a horse and seek out good James,
He'll soon find the house, 'tis great near the Thames.
It was built by a priest, a butcher by calling,
But neither priesthood nor trade could keep him from falling.
As soon as you ken the pitiful loon,
Fall down from your nag as if in a swoon ;
If he doth nothing more, he'll open his purse ;
If he likes you ('tis known he's a very good nurse)
Your fortune is made, he'll dress you in satin,
And if you're unlearn'd he'll teach you dog Latin.
On good pious James male beauty prevaleth,
And other men's fortune on such he entaileth.¹

On recovering from his accident, Carr became the constant companion of the King and his chief adviser in all affairs of State and pleasure. 'The favourite,' writes Lord Thomas Howard, 'is straight-limbed, well-favoured, strong shouldered, and smooth-faced, with some sort of show of modesty. He is so particular in his dress to please the King that he has changed his tailors and tire-men many

¹ *Ben Jonson*, by W. R. Chetwood, 1756.

times. And he is so decidedly the Court favourite that the King will lean on his arm, pinch his cheek, smooth his ruffled garment, and when directing discourse to others nevertheless still will keep gazing on him.' Honours and dignities were showered on the fortunate youth in quick succession. He was appointed keeper of Westminster Palace for life, Treasurer of Scotland, Lord Privy Seal, Warden of the Cinque Ports, and Lord Chamberlain.¹ He wore the riband of the Garter; he was created Viscount Rochester; the Barony of Brancepeth, bishopric of Durham, was conferred on him; and on his marriage he was raised to the Earldom of Somerset.² He became the owner of Rochester Castle; the lands, forfeited by Lord Darcy in Essex, were granted to him; while the 'manor of Sherborne, and all the manors and lands in Dorsetshire, whereof Sir Walter Raleigh was possessed,' fell also into his hands.³ In vain the unhappy widow of the great sailor-historian pleaded that her husband's estates might be restored to her children. 'I mun have it for Carr,' was the harsh reply of the sovereign.

James was infatuated with his idol, and placed him in boundless authority. Next the throne stood the favourite, and in the opinion of many he could not have been more supreme had he been seated upon it. We have only to scan the volumes of the State Papers relating to this period which

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, June 12, 1611; October 27, 1613; June 30, 1614; July 13, 1614.

² *Ibid.* May 1, 1611; March 25, 1611; November 3, 1613; November 11, 1618.

³ *Ibid.* July 2, 1611; November, 1612; November 25, 1618.

have been published, to see how powerful and extensive was the control which the recently-created peer then exercised. Did a divine solicit promotion in the Church, he begged the favourite to mention his name to the King, and to use his good offices to further his suit. Was it considered advisable for some curious foreign correspondence to be placed before the royal eyes, the Secretary of State forwarded it to Carr for the purpose. Did the Archbishop of Canterbury wish a volume against the Papists to be read by James, he enclosed it to my Lord of Somerset with the necessary instructions. The Merchant Adventurers, anxious for trading privileges, sent their petitions in the first instance to the favourite for his approval. Old place-hunters seeking after the reversion of a pension besought the omnipotent Carr to be their friend. The auditors of the revenue took their instructions from him. He who was desirous of farming the imposts on French and Rhenish wines made his application to Rochester. If the Court physician found James a refractory patient—and, like many men who dabble in medicine, he was the most trying and self-willed of invalids—he begged the favourite to come to his aid. ‘The King is threatened,’ writes Dr. de Mayerne to Carr,¹ ‘with a multiplication of his fits of gravely cholic, unless he will listen to advice and adopt the necessary remedies. I have written a long discourse on the subject, but I fear he will throw it aside unread. I beg your lordship to read it to his Majesty and urge on him the necessity of attending to it.’

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, August 22, 1613.

The Company of East India Merchants, anxious for future favours, presented Carr with a piece of gold plate valued at six hundred pounds. The town of Rochester, hearing that the King intended to call a Parliament, wrote to the favourite offering him the nomination of one of their two burgesses.¹ Whilst the famous College of Christ Church, at Oxford, forwarded him a petition desiring him 'to become their patron and a member of their college, which boasts a regal foundation, and has the Duke of Lennox, Lord Aubigny, the Sackvilles, Cliffords, and Sydneys as members.' Yet this homage and recognition of absolute power do not appear to have turned the young man's head. He was courteous, urbane, and not too difficult of access. 'Many people,' writes Lord Northampton to him,² 'noting your lordship's skill in answering letters, and your urbanity, wish to see you Secretary.' Nor did the favourite place a price upon the service he was called upon to render. It was his boast, as he wrote to Northampton, that he was a courtier whose hand never took bribes. In one of his despatches to Madrid, the Spanish Ambassador, after giving a few particulars of the English Court—that the King grows too fat to hunt comfortably, and eats and drinks so recklessly that it is thought he will not be long lived; that the Queen leads a quiet life, not meddling with business, and is on good terms with the King; that the Prince Henry is a fine youth, of sweet disposition, and, under good masters, might

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, February 18, 1614.

² *Ibid.* August 12, 1612.

easily be trained to the religion his predecessors lived in ; that the Council is composed of men of little knowledge, some Catholics, but most schismatics or atheists ; and the like ;—winds up by saying : ‘ The King resolves on all business with Viscount Rochester alone. His chief favourites are Scotchmen, and especially Viscount Rochester.’¹

The young man was now at the very meridian of his splendour ; as a subject it was almost impossible for him to attain to higher honours. We have now to trace the causes which ushered in his overthrow. Among the beauties of the Court was Frances, Countess of Essex, a daughter of the family of Howard—a house then noted for the unscrupulous ambition of its men and for the open frailties of its women. Poets raved about her wealthy auburn locks, her dazzling complexion, her small ripe mouth, her perfectly chiselled features ; whilst her wondrous hazel eyes were scarcely felicitously described as ‘ wombs of stars.’ The married life of this ‘ beauty of the first magnitude in the horizon of the Court’ had not been a happy one. At the age of thirteen she had been wedded to the Earl of Essex, who was then but a mere boy. On account of their tender years, the young couple for a time were separated ; but, if we are to believe the evidence before us, when their union was permitted, their relationship still continued on its former footing. The Countess, after a trying interval, prayed for a divorce on the ground of nullity of marriage. She declared she was a virgin-wife, and satisfied a jury of her own sex of the truth

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, September 22, 1618.

of her assertion ; but as her ladyship, during this Platonic alliance with her husband, had amply avenged herself for all marital shortcomings, the gossip of history declares that, to prevent any unpleasant disclosures, ' another young gentleman (the Countess was closely veiled during the investigation) was fobbed in her place.'

The trial was the great topic of the hour. The Court was divided in opinion ; some of the judges, like the Archbishop of Canterbury, declaring that those whom God had joined together could not be divided, whilst others held the views on the subject which at the present day prevail. The King, however, was the warm friend of the petitioner, and used all his authority to obtain a verdict in her favour. He browbeat the judges who differed from him, he laid down the law with his usual travesty of wisdom and erudition, and declared that none should entertain opinions which were opposed to those of their sovereign. ' If a judge,' he writes to the Archbishop of Canterbury, ' should have a prejudice in respect of persons, it should become you rather to have a *faith implicit* in my judgment, as well in respect of some skill I have in *divinity*, as also that I hope no honest man doubts of the uprightness of my conscience. And the best thankfulness that you, that are so far "*my creature*," can use towards me is to reverence and follow my judgment, and not to contradict it, except where you may demonstrate unto me that I am mistaken or wrong informed.' The royal wishes carried the day. Save a few dissentient voices, the

Court declared the marriage between Robert Earl of Essex and the Lady Frances Howard void and of none effect, 'and that the Lady Frances was, and is, and so ought to be free and at liberty from any bond of such pretended marriage *de facto* contracted and solemnised. And we do pronounce that she ought to be divorced, and so we do free and divorce her, leaving them as touching other marriages to their consciences in the Lord.'

The Lady Frances was not slow to avail herself of the freedom granted her. Ever since the handsome face of Robert Carr had been seen in the galleries of Whitehall, the young Countess had been smitten with the favourite. At balls and masques she had crossed his path, and her words and looks had revealed the feelings that had been awakened within her. She had also visited a noted astrologer in Lambeth, and had begged him to give her potions which would cause the object of her attachment to respond to her passion. Yet there had been no need for philters and magic arts. Young Carr was neither cold nor obdurate ; at first the amorous Countess was the one who loved, whilst her gallant was the other who allowed himself to be loved ; but soon the sprightly gaiety and beauty of his mistress brought the favourite to her feet, and he vowed that life unshared by her was robbed of all its sweetness. And now it was that Lady Essex brooded over the thought of divorce. The King, who but re-echoed the wishes of Carr, cordially approved of her resolve, and, as we have seen, strongly prejudiced the Court in the interests of the young wife. 'The divorce between the Earl and Coun-

tess of Essex,' writes Chamberlain to Carleton,¹ 'is soon to be decided, and is as important as opening a gap which would not soon be stopped. It is said that Rochester is in love with her.'

The report was fully justified. A few weeks after the divorce had been pronounced, Lady Essex was led a second time to the altar, to be united now to no mere boy, but to a powerful peer, the fondly cherished friend of his sovereign, and one of the handsomest men of his day. The ceremony was attended with every sign of homage and rejoicing. The King, the Queen, the Prince of Wales, the bench of bishops, and all the leading peers of the realm were present at the marriage. The bridegroom, in order that there should be no disparity between him and the late husband, was created Earl of Somerset. The young Countess, as she walked up the aisle of the Chapel Royal on the arm of the King, allowed her hair to fall unfettered to her waist as a proof of the innocent character of her former union, for to be 'married in their hair' was a privilege only accorded to maidens. The Bishop of Bath and Wells performed the ceremony, and his Majesty was graciously pleased to pay all expenses. In the evening, 'a gallant masque of lords' took place in honour of the occasion. Every attention that servility and respect could inspire was lavished upon the newly-wedded Earl and Countess. They were the recipients of the most magnificent presents. They were lavishly entertained by the Lord Mayor and aldermen at a splendid banquet in the City, their carriage

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, June 23, 1613.

was escorted through Cheapside by torchlight, amid the cheers of the mob, and their healths were drunk with vociferous applause. The members of Gray's Inn, disguised as hyacinths, jonquils, daffodils, and other flowers, performed a masque, especially written in their honour by the great Lord Bacon, before the King and a brilliant company. Masques, plays, and 'wassails,' in commemoration of the event, followed each other in quick succession. Indeed, the national rejoicings could scarcely have been more marked had the heir-apparent to the throne taken unto himself a princess. Shortly after the honeymoon the Earl of Somerset settled himself in London, taking Sir Baptist Hicks' house in Kensington, which he sumptuously furnished.¹

But a cloud was slowly springing up, which was to cast its black shadows over all this prosperity, and turn the future into hopeless gloom. Among the eminent men who then adorned the Court of James, the name of Sir Thomas Overbury takes high rank. Though eclipsed by the fame of his more splendid contemporaries, his works were much read and admired; and even at the present day his poem of the 'Wife' and his 'Characters' will repay perusal by the curious. But apart from his literary fame, Overbury exercised considerable influence in the circles of the Court from the soundness of his judgment, his knowledge of men and affairs, and his decision of character. He had, shortly after Carr's introduction into the society at Whitehall, struck

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, November and December, 1613; January 1614.

up a warm friendship with the favourite. He was the young man's adviser-in-chief, his father-confessor, and the instigator of most of his actions. It was said that, indirectly, the knight was the sovereign of the country: for though Rochester ruled the King, it was Overbury who ruled Rochester. To the intrigue with the Countess of Essex, Overbury had raised no obstacle. Nay, he had even facilitated matters by helping the untutored Rochester to indite the love-letters he sent to his mistress. But in the eyes of Overbury, there was a wide distinction between an intrigue with a divorced woman and a passion which would be satisfied with nothing less than honourable marriage.

The keen man of the world was no stranger to the antecedents of Frances, Countess of Essex, and he felt assured that his friend would bitterly rue the day he made so fickle a dame his wife. Accordingly, he essayed all his efforts to dissuade the infatuated youth from his purpose, but in vain. Rochester was enslaved by the charms of the fascinating Countess, and swore that nothing in her past history should be regarded by him as an obstacle to marriage. High words broke out between the two friends. 'Well, my lord,' cried Overbury at the close of a discussion, 'if you do marry that filthy base woman, you will utterly ruin your honour and yourself. You shall never do it by my advice or consent.' Hot with rage, Rochester replied, 'My own legs are straight and strong enough to bear me up, but in faith I will be even with you for this,' and he indignantly turned upon his heel. The conversation took place in one of the galleries at White-

hall, and was overheard by two persons in an adjoining chamber, whose evidence became afterwards of importance.

On quitting his mentor, Rochester went straight to the King and begged that Overbury might be appointed to the vacant embassy at St. Petersburg. We now learn that James, whether from jealousy of the influence exercised by the knight over Rochester, or from jealousy of the reputation that the author of the 'Characters' enjoyed, or from whatever other cause, cordially disliked Overbury, and had long wanted to get rid of him at Court.¹ He had refrained, however, from giving expression to this dislike, in order not to pain his cherished Carr, who he saw was devoted to the knight. But when he heard that it was the favourite himself who was suggesting the absence of Overbury from the country, he gladly acceded to the request, and at once made out the appointment. The treacherous Rochester, playing a double part, now resumed his intimacy with his former friend, pretended that he had forgotten the words that had passed between them, and when the offer of the diplomatic post was mentioned, strongly advised Overbury not to accept it. 'If you be blamed or committed for it,' said he, 'care not, I will quickly free thee.' Accordingly, the knight, who at first had been willing to go abroad, declared that 'he could not, and would not accept a foreign employment.'²

The King, worked upon by Rochester, vowed that such disobedience should meet with its deserts, and committed Overbury to the Tower. Here the unhappy man languished

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, May 19, 1613.

² *Ibid.*

for months. He ardently begged for liberty ; he implored the promised aid of the favourite. ' Sir,' he wrote to Somerset, ' I wonder you have not yet found means to effect my delivery ; but I remember you said you would be even with me, and so indeed you are. But assure yourself, my lord, if you do not release me, but suffer me thus to die, my blood will be required at your hands.' All prayers and remonstrances were, however, useless. The health of the prisoner gave way ; he was seized with frequent vomitings, and, after a confinement which lasted from May to the following October, he passed away in agonies. No one was permitted to view the corpse. A pit was dug within the precincts of the Tower, and into it the body, with the burial of a dog, was hastily thrown. ' Nobody pities him,' writes Chamberlain, of the dead man, who was noted for his arrogant and imperious demeanour to all with whom he came in contact, ' and his own friends do not speak well of him.'¹

We pass over an interval of two years. The Earl and Countess of Somerset had been made man and wife, and were spending their time in the amusements of the hour, in frequent sojourns at their country seat of Chesterford Park, whither the King sometimes went, and in buying paintings of the old masters for their town house at Kensington. My lord of Somerset was still the special favourite of his sovereign, though there were signs that his power was on the wane. Success and prosperity had made him insolent, and his enemies were longing for his downfall. His former

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, October 14, 1618.

vivacity had deserted him, his face looked worn, and those charms and graces which had been so specially attractive to James were now on the decline. He became dull, morose, and imperious. A handsome Leicestershire lad had lately been appointed cup-bearer to the monarch, and the courtiers recognised in the new arrival the successor to the favourite.

And now dark rumours began to be circulated of foul play in the Tower. It was said that Overbury had not met with his death honestly ; that one of the accomplices had confessed that the knight had for months been systematically poisoned, and that certain noble persons, deep in the intimacies of the throne, were gravely implicated in the matter. It was impossible that the affair could be hushed up. The King issued instructions to inquire into the case, the law officers of the Crown set to work with their investigations, and soon every detail touching the terrible deed was laid bare. It now transpired that the Countess of Somerset, infuriated against Overbury for the manner in which he had spoken of her, and, above all, for his having attempted to prevent the marriage between herself and her lover, had resolved to surround him when in the Tower with her creatures, and put him to death by poison. Her agents were examined, denied the charge, then fully confessed, and suffered penitently the extreme penalty of the law. Four persons were pre-eminently implicated—Richard Weston, Anne Turner, Sir Gervais Helwys, and James Franklin. Franklin was the apothecary who sold the poisons ; Helwys was the Lieutenant of the Tower, who was privy to the proceedings ;

Mrs. Turner—the introducer of starch into England—was the confidante of the countess, who procured the poisons from Franklin; whilst Weston, as the gaoler of the unhappy Overbury, was the agent appointed to administer the drugs to the prisoner.

As none of these persons had any cause of resentment against Overbury, it was evident that they were only the instruments of others. Warrants were now issued for the arrest of the Earl and Countess of Somerset. Lady Somerset was at her town house, and at once was taken to the Tower, where she implored her keepers not to confine her in the same cell as that in which Overbury had breathed his last. The King was at that time at Royston on a royal progress, and accompanied by Somerset. As the messenger arrived with the warrant, his Majesty, according to his custom, was lolling upon the favourite's neck and kissing him. 'When shall I see thee again? On my soul, I shall neither eat nor sleep until you come again,' he asked Somerset, who, unconscious of the writ issued against him, was on the point of quitting Royston for London. The favourite replied that he would return in a few days. The King then lolled about his neck and kissed him repeatedly. At this moment Somerset was arrested by the warrant of the Lord Chief Justice Coke. He started back indignantly, exclaiming that never was such an affront offered to a peer of England in the presence of his sovereign. 'Nay, man,' said the King, 'if Coke were to send for me I should have to go.' Then, as Somerset quitted the royal presence, the crafty

James, who had been mainly instrumental in obtaining the warrant for the arrest of the favourite, and who now, wearied with the intimacy, was only too glad of an opportunity of effectually breaking it off, said aloud, 'Now, the devil go with thee, for I will never see thy face any more!' Shortly after the departure of Somerset, the Lord Chief Justice arrived at Royston. The King took him on one side and told him that he was acquainted with the most wicked murder by Somerset and his wife that was ever committed; that they had made him their agent to carry on their amours and murderous designs, and therefore he charged the Chief Justice with all the scrutiny possible to search into the bottom of the conspiracy, and to spare no man, however great, who was implicated in the affair. 'God's curse,' he cried passionately, 'be upon you and yours if you spare any of them! And God's curse be upon me and mine if I pardon any one of them!'¹

The trial created the greatest sensation. All places of public business and amusement were deserted during the proceedings. Westminster Hall was crowded in every part from floor to roof. Seats were sold at enormous prices. Three hundred pounds of our money were given for a corner which would scarcely contain a dozen persons. Sixty pounds for the two days during which the trial lasted was no unusual sum to be paid for the accommodation doled out to a small family party. No seat could be obtained for less than three pounds. The Court opened at nine, but by six

¹ *Court and Character of King James*, by Sir A. Weldon, 1651.

o'clock in the morning the doors in front of Westminster Hall were thronged by eager competitors for unreserved places. Beneath a cloth of estate at the upper end of the hall sat Lord Chancellor Ellesmere, as the Lord High Steward. Close to him stood Garter King-at-Arms, the Seal-bearer and Black Rod, supported by the Sergeant-at-Arms. On either side of the High Steward sat the peers who constituted the Court. The judges, clad in their scarlet robes, were collected in a row somewhat lower than the peers, the Lord Chief Justice occupying the most conspicuous position on the bench. At the lower end of the Hall were the King's Counsel, with Sir Francis Bacon, who then held office as Attorney-General, at their head. Separated from the counsel by a bar was a small platform on which the prisoners were to stand. In front of it stood a gentleman porter with an axe, who, when sentence of death was pronounced against a peer or peeress, turned its edge full upon the condemned.

Lady Somerset was the first to be put upon her trial. She was dressed 'in black tammell, a cypress chaperon, a cobweb lawn ruff and cuffs.' She was deadly pale, but her terror only the more enhanced her bewitching beauty, which made a great impression upon the Court. As she took her place she made three reverences to her judges. The Lord High Steward then explained the object of the proceedings, and it was noticed that during the reading of the indictment, when mention was made of the name of Weston and of the part that he had played in the crime, the prisoner put her fan

before her face, nor did she remove it until the reading of the indictment was ended. This preliminary over, the Clerk of the Crown, amidst the most painful silence asked :—

‘Frances, Countess of Somerset, art thou guilty of the felony and murder, or not guilty?’

In a low voice, ‘but wonderful fearful,’ the Countess, bowing to her judges, answered, ‘Guilty.’

The Attorney-General now rose up and addressed the Court in a few words. He congratulated the prisoner upon freely acknowledging her guilt; he eulogised the conduct of the King in seeking only the ends of justice; and he held out hopes of pardon to the Countess by quoting the words, ‘mercy and truth be met together.’ The King’s instructions for the investigation of the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury were then read, the Lord Chief Justice declaring that they were so masterly that they ‘deserved to be written in a sunbeam.’ Again the Clerk of the Crown put a question to the prisoner :—

‘Frances, Countess of Somerset, hold up thine hand. Whereas thou hast been indicted, arraigned, and pleaded guilty as accessory before the fact of the wilful poisoning and murder of Sir Thomas Overbury, what canst thou now say for thyself why judgment of death should not be pronounced against thee?’

‘I can much aggravate, but nothing extenuate my fault,’ was the reply, in such low tones as scarcely to reach the ears of the High Steward. ‘I desire mercy, and that the lords will intercede for me to the King.’

There was a pause whilst the white staff was delivered to the presiding judge.

‘Frances, Countess of Somerset,’ said the Lord High Steward solemnly, ‘whereas thou hast been indicted, arraigned, pleaded guilty, and that thou hast nothing to say for thyself, it is now my part to pronounce judgment ; only thus much before, since my lords have heard with what humility and grief you have confessed the fact, I do not doubt they will signify so much to the King and mediate for his grace towards you ; but in the meantime, according to the law, the sentence must be this : “That thou shalt be carried from hence to the Tower of London, and from thence to the place of execution, where you are to be hanged by the neck till you be dead, and the Lord have mercy on your soul.”’ The Countess was then removed to her quarters in Raleigh’s house in the garden of the Tower.

The proceedings had been very rapid. The Court had opened at nine, and by eleven the prisoner had been condemned.¹ On the whole, the impression made by the Countess had been favourable. ‘Her carriage hath much commended her,’ writes one to Sir Dudley Carleton, the English Ambassador at the Hague,² ‘for before and after her condemnation she behaved so nobly and worthily as did express to the world she was well taught and had better learned her lesson.’ Chamberlain also writes to Sir Dudley : ‘She won pity by her sober demeanour, which in my opinion was more curious and confident than was fit for a lady in such

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, May 25, 1616.

² *Ibid.*

distress, and yet she shed or made show of some tears divers times. She was used with more respect than is usual, nothing being aggravated against her by any circumstance, nor any invective used but only touching the main offence of murder ; as likewise it was said to-day to be the King's pleasure that no odious or uncivil speeches should be given. The general opinion is that she shall not die, and many good words were given to put her in hope of the King's mercy.'¹ One Pallavicino, with the enthusiasm of his nation, comments upon the trial in quite an excited strain. 'The first Friday wherein the lady was tried,' he writes to our Ambassador at the Hague,² 'imagine you see one of the fairest, respective (*sic*), honorable, gracefulest proceedings for judgment, reverence, humbleness, discretion that ever yet presented itself to public view ; the prisoner's behaviour truly noble, fashioned to act a tragedy with so much sweetness, grace and good form, as if all the Graces had heaped their whole powers to render her that day the most beloved, the most commiserated spectacle, and the best wished unto that ever presented itself before a scene of death. The modesty of confession in her shortened all legal openings of the cause ; wrought the most courteous language from the attorney Sir Francis Bacon that his eloquence, favour, modesty and judgment might afford ; all consequently exacting from the Lord High Steward a judgment and sentence (harsh truly according to the law), but so sweetened by

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, May 25, 1616.

² *Ibid.* May 29, 1616.

the deliverer that it is certainly affirmed death felt not her sting nor she knew at her departure to have been of the condemned.'

Still, no little disappointment had been created by the course pursued by the fair culprit. It had not been expected that she would at once criminate herself by pleading guilty, and the Attorney-General, on the presumption that she would avow her innocence, had prepared an elaborate speech, which can be read in his works, eloquently inveighing against her sinful conduct. The proceedings, instead of being eminently sensational, had been dull and commonplace in the extreme. From the testimony of the accomplices who had recently expiated their crimes upon the gibbet, the public were well aware that the case presented features full of excitement. It was anticipated that the whole past life of the Countess would be laid bare—how she had flirted with Prince Henry; how, before her divorce, she had arranged stolen interviews with her lover in Paternoster Row; how she had availed herself of the philters and potions, the charms and immodest emblems of the fashionable astrologer to attain her ends; how she had intrigued to surround Overbury in the Tower by her paid creatures; how she had sent him poisoned tarts and jellies: in short, it was expected that every detail in this drama of love and murder would be disclosed. And yet nothing fresh had been divulged; the vast audience had been gratified by a sight of the notorious criminal, but no highly-spiced incident, as had been fondly hoped, had been brought forward for their horror or amuse-

ment. Those who had paid large sums for their seats did not consider they had received their money's worth.

Matters, however, looked more promising with the husband. On his imprisonment in the Bloody Tower, the Earl of Somerset assumed a threatening attitude. He declined to acknowledge the jurisdiction of his peers. He swore that he would not plead before the Court. He had been advised to follow the example of his wife, to confess his guilt, to bow to the verdict, and to trust to the King for pardon. These he sternly refused to do; nay, he threatened that if he were brought face to face with his peers he would disclose matters which would prove most injurious to his Majesty. For a whole week frequent were the negotiations that were entered into between Somerset and the Crown, the King imploring the favourite to admit his crime, and to have no fear of the consequences; but still the prisoner maintained his morose and defiant air. At last, by a trick of the Lieutenant of the Tower, Somerset was induced to appear before his judges. He was told that if he only would present himself at Westminster Hall he would be permitted to return instantly again 'without any further proceedings, only you shall know your enemies and their malice, though they shall have no power over you.' By this shallow device he allowed himself to be entrapped, and on finding that he had been overreached, 'recollected a better temper, and went on calmly in his trial, where he held the company until seven at night.' He was dressed in deep mourning, as if the sentence of the Court had already plunged him into the grief of

a widower. He wore 'a plain black satin suit, laid with two satin laces in a seam ; a gown of uncut velvet, lined with unshorn, all the sleeves laid with satin lace ; a pair of gloves with satin tops ; his George about his neck, his hair curled, his visage pale, his beard long, his eyes sunk in his head.' On being called he pleaded not guilty. It was feared that in his temper he would divulge matters which might gravely compromise the King. Two servants were accordingly placed on either side of him, with cloaks on their arms, and the prisoner was warned that if he uttered but a word against his Majesty these men had orders to muffle him instantly, drag him down, and hasten him off to the Tower. He would then be sentenced in his absence, and at once be put to death.

Into the details of the trial we shall not enter ; never was the machinery of the law more flagrantly put in motion to bring in a verdict against a prisoner. Stripped of all technicalities, Somerset was accused of having incited the keeper of Sir Thomas Overbury to administer poison to his prisoner. The administering of the drugs was thus stated : 'Rose-acre, May 9, 1615 ; white arsenic, June 1 ; mercury sublimate in tarts, July 16 ; and mercury sublimate in a clyster, Sept. 14, all in the same year.' The Lord Chief Justice, with a partiality not often exhibited on the Bench, employed his talents to prejudice the jury against the accused. Testimony that would have been of service to the prisoner was rejected. Hearsay evidence of the loosest character was freely admitted. The most important witnesses

against Somerset were men who had been hanged for their crimes, and whom he could not cross-examine. After a whole day thus passed in burlesquing justice a verdict of guilty was brought in, and the quondam favourite was sentenced to death.

Contemporary opinion was strongly opposed to the finding of the Court. 'The least country gentleman in England,' writes the French Ambassador at the Court of London, 'would not have suffered for what the Earl of Somerset was condemned, and that if his enemies had not been powerful he would not have been found guilty, for there was no convincing proof against him.' 'Some that were then at Somerset's trial,' says another, 'and not partial, conceived in conscience, and as himself says to the King, that he fell rather by want of well defending than by force of proofs.' He was prosecuted, writes a third, because 'King James was weary of him, and Buckingham had supplied his place.' The most probable view of this *cause célèbre* is that Somerset was perfectly innocent of any attempt at poisoning Overbury. He had been instrumental in confining his former friend in the Tower, and it had been his intention that the knight should be kept prisoner for some time; but we have no evidence that Somerset knew anything of the terrible vengeance which Lady Essex (for she was not then his wife) was wreaking upon the prisoner; on the contrary, what trustworthy evidence we possess is in his favour, for we find him giving orders that physicians were to see Overbury and look after his health. Had he been cognisant of the plot to poison the prisoner, he would

scarcely have despatched those who, on investigation, might have detected the conspiracy. 'Many believed,' writes Weldon,¹ 'the Earl of Somerset guilty of Overbury's death, but the most thought him guilty only of the breach of friendship (and that in a high point) by suffering his imprisonment, which was the highway to his murder; and this conjecture I take to be of the soundest opinion.'

It is unfortunate that the reports we possess of this famous trial are open to question. In the version in Howell's *State Trials* we are referred to no authorities, nor have we any evidence to the contrary that we are not studying a garbled account, furnished by those interested in condemning the prisoner. The reports of our earlier State trials were often prepared under the inspection of the law officers of the Crown, and sometimes were even revised by the sovereign himself; hence they give only a partial and one-sided view of what took place. 'The course of proceeding in ancient times,' writes Amos, who has made the legal aspect of this trial a special study,² 'for crushing an individual who had excited fears or kindled hatred in the breast of a sovereign, was somewhat after the following manner: Written examinations were taken in secret, and often wrung from prisoners by the agonies of the rack. Such parts of these documents, and such parts only, as were criminative, were read before a judge removable at the will of the Crown, and a jury packed

¹ *Court and Character of King James.*

² *The Great Oyer of Poisoning.* by Andrew Amos. A most curious and able work.

for the occasion, who gave their verdict under terror of fine and imprisonment. Speedily the Government published whatever account of the trials suited their purposes. Subservient divines were next appointed to "press the consciences," as it was called, of the condemned, in their cells and on the scaffold; and the transaction terminated with another Government *brochure*, full of dying contrition, and eulogy by the criminal on all who had been instrumental in bringing him to the gallows. In the mean while the Star Chamber, with its pillories, its S. L.s branded on the cheeks with a hot iron, its mutilations of ears, and ruinous fines, prohibited the unauthorised publication of trials, and all free discussion upon them, as amounting to an arraignment of the King's justice.' Such compulsory testimony certainly does not inspire confidence.

Among the State Papers of this period is an account of this famous trial, which differs in many respects from the report to be found in the pages of Howell. In the manuscript we read nothing of that dispute between Somerset and Overbury in the galleries at Whitehall, relative to Lady Essex, which is so circumstantially related in Howell. From the manuscript we learn that Somerset relied greatly in his defence upon a letter written to him by Overbury, to the effect that 'a powder which he had received from the Earl had agreed with him, but that, nevertheless, he did not intend to take any more powders of the same kind.' In Howell there is no mention of this letter. According to the manuscript, the apothecary in his examination is made to state that Somerset ordered him to write to the King's physician touching physic

to be given to Overbury. This is a circumstance favourable to Somerset, but is not to be found in Howell. The speech of the prisoner in his defence is given variously in the two accounts. In the manuscript Somerset attacks the credit of the witnesses hostile to him, and desires that 'his own protestations on his oath, his honour, and his conscience should be weighed against the lewd information' of such miscreants. In Howell we have no trace of these observations. 'It is obvious,' writes Amos, 'that such passages would be the most likely to be struck out, by persons desirous of publishing a version of the proceedings which might diffuse an opinion among the public that one of the wickedest of men had been condemned after one of the fairest of trials, and by one of the justest of prosecutions.'

We have now to deal with the strange conduct of the King throughout this affair. What was the nature of the secret he feared Somerset might reveal? Why should orders have been given by the Lieutenant of the Tower to silence the prisoner and drag him away did he say a word against the King? We learn that James was so nervous and restless throughout the day on which the favourite was tried, that he sent to every boat he saw landing at the bridge, and cursed all who came without tidings.¹ He refused all food. What was the occasion of this anxiety? One reason has been given which appears to answer the question more conclusively than other guesses. It has been suggested that the King himself had a share in the murder of Overbury. We know

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, May 31, 1616.

that James had a 'rooted hatred' towards the knight; that he had been a co-operating party in the persecution; that he had enjoined the Privy Council to send Overbury to the Tower, and that he had turned a deaf ear to all petitions from the prisoner for release. He may have been cognisant of the plot of the Countess to poison Overbury, though unknown to her, and may have employed her guilt to screen his own purposes. We know that his own physician had attended upon Overbury during the latter part of his confinement, that this doctor was never called as a witness, and that the prescriptions he made out for the prisoner were never produced. We know that when foul work had been suspected, the King was among the busiest, the better to conceal his own agents, in prosecuting those accused of poisoning Overbury. We know that the proceedings against the Countess of Somerset were far from harsh, and that, in spite of the royal oath to the contrary, she received a full pardon. We know that the King used all his arguments to force the Earl of Somerset to plead guilty and to throw himself upon the mercy of the Crown, when he would have nothing more to fear. If Lord and Lady Somerset were guilty, and the King not implicated in the matter, what is the meaning of those communications between James and Carr when the latter was in the Tower? What is the meaning, in the face of the solemn promise to Coke, of a full pardon being granted to the guilty couple?

But if the King had given instructions, independently of and unknown to Lady Somerset, to make an end of Overbury, nothing is more probable than that the favourite,

at that time the bosom friend of the Crown, would have been informed of the design. Acquainted with this plot within a plot, Somerset on the day of his trial might have disclosed matters which would have caused a far bolder man than James to tremble. It is not surprising, therefore, if the surmise be correct, that the King was terribly nervous throughout the hours the favourite was before the Court. Nor is there anything in the life of James to render this suspicion unjustifiable. The first Stuart on the English throne was a true son of the vicious beauty, his mother. He was a hard, cruel, weak, degraded creature. In the opinion of several of his sober contemporaries, he was addicted to heathenish practices. There were dark stories about his having poisoned his own son, the popular Prince Henry. He immured Sir Walter Raleigh in the Tower, under the harshest restrictions. He proved himself utterly destitute of feeling in his conduct towards his kinswoman, the ill-fated Arabella Stuart. A career thus sullied is capable of any crime; and when suspicion points the finger, and raises its accusing voice, saying, 'Thou art the man,' posterity cannot be considered hasty or vindictive in giving credence to the charge.

After an imprisonment of some years in the Tower, a full pardon was granted to the Earl and Countess of Somerset.¹ The guilty beauty and the exiled favourite passed the remainder of their life in seclusion, and it is said in mutual

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, January 17, 1622.

estrangement. One daughter was born to them, the Lady Anne, who afterwards became the mother of that Lord William Russell who, endowed with virtues his grandparents never possessed, met the fate from which they had been spared.

THE MASSACRE OF AMBOYNA.

With an ill-grace the Dutch their mischief do ;
They've both ill-nature and ill-manners too.
Well may they boast themselves an ancient nation ;
For they were bred ere manners were in fashion :
And their new commonwealth has set them free
Only from honour and civility.—DRYDEN'S *Amboyna*.

THE rise and development of the East India Company are among the most romantic passages of history. That a small body of English merchants should have settled themselves in a strange and distant land, should have overcome all opposition, and by their courage and firmness should have gradually extended their operations until they had compelled the fiercest princes to do them homage, are events so full of incident and plot that they never fail to excite our interest even when our sympathies are repelled. Thrice told as has been the story, the State Papers of our colonies yet shed a new light upon the subject, and illuminate the narrative with details not visible in the printed works of the chroniclers and historians of our Indian Empire.¹ Thanks to their chatty letters and business-like minutes we read how our East

¹ *State Papers, East Indies*, edited by W. Noel Sainsbury, 1513-1624, 8 vols.

India Company originated, the prosperity it achieved, and the animosities it excited. We are taken behind the scenes of Eastern courts, and watch the intrigues of rival trading associations for special support and patronage. We are introduced to that mysterious personage of the seventeenth century, the Great Mogul, and are made acquainted with his tastes and habits. We see the bitter jealousy of Spain and Portugal at the success of our factors. We learn how false was the amity of the Dutch, and how terrible was the tragedy which was the end of their treacherous friendship. Indeed, there is little connected with the rise and progress of our commercial relations with the East which will not be found in the collection of documents relating to our colonies narrated with a breadth and fulness which leave nothing to be desired.

The defeat of the Spanish Armada had not only established the maritime supremacy of England, but had aroused the cupidity of our trading classes to take part in the enterprises which had resulted in the realisation of such wealth to the Iberian peninsula. Within a few months of the destruction of the proud fleet which was to have made the Spaniard the master of our shores, a body of English merchants petitioned the Virgin Queen for permission to send ships to India. In their memorial they alluded to the prosperity which had attended upon the establishment of the Spanish and Portuguese settlements, and drew attention to the many ports in the countries bordering on the India and China seas, which might be visited with advantage by English ships,

‘ where sales might be made of English cloths and other staple and manufactured articles, and the produce of those countries purchased ; such a trade would by degrees add to the shipping, seamen, and naval force of the kingdom, in the same manner as it has increased the Portuguese fleets.’ Elizabeth, always willing to lend the weight of her authority to the furtherance of any scheme calculated to add to the power of England, provided it did not lead to severe encroachments upon the Royal Treasury, readily granted the desired permission, and accordingly, in 1591, three ships, under the command of Captain Raymond, sailed for the East.

An account of this voyage is printed in Hakluyt ; the ships were separated from each other by a severe storm, Raymond was wrecked and never heard of again, and the only vessel, after ‘ many grievous misfortunes,’ that accomplished the voyage was the ‘ Rear-Admiral,’ commanded by Master James Lancaster. It has been generally supposed that this was the first English expedition despatched to the East Indies, but both in the volumes of Purchas and of Hakluyt accounts of two previous voyages will be found, one in 1579 by Stevens, and the other in 1583 by Fitch, ‘ wherein the strange rites, manners, and customs of those people, and the exceeding rich trade and commodities of those countries, are faithfully set down and diligently described.’ Other detached expeditions followed in the wake of that of Raymond, and the reports that were brought home of the treasures obtained by the Portuguese and the Dutch in those regions led certain English merchants, in 1599, to form themselves into a

company, with the special object of trading with the East Indies. A sum of over thirty thousand pounds was subscribed for; a petition was presented to the Council praying for incorporation as a company, 'for that the trade of the Indies, being so far remote from hence, cannot be traded but in a joint and united stock.' Both the Queen and her Council cordially approved of the enterprise, and no opposition was raised in any quarter.

The 'Charter of Incorporation of the East India Company, by the name of the Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies,' was granted December 31, 1600. It was to remain in force fifteen years. George, Earl of Cumberland, and 215 knights, aldermen, and merchants were the original members of the company. Lancaster was appointed admiral of the fleet, with John Davis, the North-West navigator, as second in command. In order that the expedition should be stamped with the impress of the royal approval, Queen Elizabeth had herself issued a circular letter to 'the Kings of Sumatra and other places in the East Indies,' desiring them to encourage her subjects in their attempt to open up a commerce between the two countries, whereby her amity and friendship would be maintained and greater benefits be derived by the Indies from intercourse with England than from intercourse either with Spain or Portugal.¹ The wishes of her Majesty were obeyed. The voyage was eminently successful. Factories were settled at Acheen and Bantam by Lancaster. The King of Sumatra gave permission

¹ *State Papers, East Indies*, January [?], 1601.

to English merchants, under the most favourable terms, to trade within his territories, whilst, in reply to the letter of the Queen, he handed Lancaster a despatch full of the warmest feelings of friendship towards England and her sovereign, accompanied by 'a ring beautified with a ruby, two vestures woven and embroidered with gold, and placed within a purple box of china,' which he requested should be presented to Elizabeth.¹ The customs on the goods brought home from this first voyage amounted, it is said, to nearly one thousand pounds. So good a beginning was not permitted to come to nought through apathy or negligence. Voyage succeeded voyage, and in spite of the hostility of the Spaniards and the Portuguese, and of the treacherous friendship of the Dutch. England, at the end of a few years, had succeeded in firmly establishing a lucrative and increasing trade in the East Indies.

'To almost every place,' writes Mr. Sainsbury, 'where there was the least likelihood of obtaining a communication with the natives, English vessels resorted, in most instances with success; and where this was not so, the cause was rather attributable to the conduct of the Dutch than to the Company's neglect of the necessary precautions, the English being almost invariably received with courtesy, and even kindness, wherever they went. The Company never lost sight of the danger of attack from Spaniards and Portuguese. Care was always taken, before trading or settling in a new country, to ascertain the feeling of the natives, and in most cases leave

¹ *State Papers, East Indies*, October, 1602.

or "licence" was granted for the English to do as they liked.'

Shortly after the accession of James the charter of the Company was renewed, but with most important additions. Instead of their privileges being limited to fifteen years, 'the whole, entire, and only trade and traffic to the East Indies' were granted to the Company for ever. The result of this monopoly was the speedy establishment of factories at Surat, Agra, and Masulipatam; at the chief ports of Java, Sumatra, and Borneo; and at many of the towns in the kingdoms of Malacca, Camboja, Pegu, Siam, and Cochinchina. Shares in the voyages were often 'sold by the candle,' and commanded exorbitant prices, the object being that the Company 'may better know the worth of their adventures.' We read of adventures of 60*l.* being knocked down at 130*l.*, and of those of 100*l.* realising nearly 200*l.* It is not, therefore, surprising that shares in the Company were eagerly sought after, and that as much intrigue and competition were required to obtain the post of director as were necessary for high office at Court.

At the outset of their proceedings the Company were fortunate in securing the support and protection of the Great Mogul. This terrible personage, whom both rumour and fable had succeeded in raising to the position of the one potentate of the East, whose frown was death, but whose friendship was omnipotent, had been appeased by courteous letters from James, and, what had appealed more closely to his Oriental mind, by numerous presents from the English

merchants. The papers calendared by Mr. Sainsbury afford us some interesting particulars in connexion with the life and character of this powerful prince. We are told that 'he takes himself to be the greatest monarch in the world,' is 'extremely proud and covetous,' a drunkard, 'and so given to vice that the chief captains care not for him, and willingly would never come near him.' Music, it appears, 'had a great charm for him ;' playing upon the virginals, however, was 'not esteemed,' but with the cornet and the harp he was so 'exceedingly delighted' that he offered to make any of his subjects who could learn these instruments 'a great man.' His rapacity for presents was unbounded. 'Something or other, though not worth two shillings, must be presented every eight days,' writes the chief factor at Ajmere. 'Nothing is to be expected,' says another, 'from the King without continual gifts.' Like all savages, he was delighted with strange things, no matter how intrinsically valueless they might prove. Rich gloves, embroidered caps, purses, looking-glasses, drinking-cups, pictures, knives, striking clocks, coloured beaver hats or silk stockings for his women, were recommended by the factors abroad to the officers of the Company as presents to be brought out. 'Indeed,' writes one, 'if you have a jack to roast meat on, I think he would like it, or any toy of new invention.'

The importance which the Great Mogul attached to gifts was not overlooked by the authorities at home. One Edwardes was sent over as 'lieger,' with 'great presents.' Among his stock-in-trade, which was to propitiate the barbarous monarch,

were suits of armour, swords, mastiffs, greyhounds, little dogs, pictures of King James and his Queen, and a coach and horse, together with 'a coachman who had been in the service of the Bishop of Lichfield, to drive the coach.' The portraits of the King and Queen of England struck the Great Mogul with admiration. 'He esteemed it so well for the workmanship,' writes Edwardes, 'that the day after he sent for all his painters in public to see the same, who did admire it, and confessed that none of them could anything near imitate the same, which makes him prize it above all the rest, and esteem it for a jewel.' He was almost as much delighted with one of the English mastiffs that had been brought out. With the instinct of the savage, he at once wished to witness the prowess of the animal in an unequal battle. The mastiff was first pitted against a tiger and then with a bear, both of which it killed, 'whereby the King was exceedingly pleased.' Pictures, mastiffs, Irish greyhounds, and well-fed water-spaniels, seem to have been the gifts most approved of by his Majesty. But, though the Great Mogul was a glutton touching the things he expected to be given him, we are informed that he was no mean purchaser of the Company's goods. 'Pearls, rubies, and emeralds will be bought by the King in infinite quantities,' writes a factor from Agra, 'as also rich velvets, cloth of gold, rich tapestry, satins, damasks,' &c.; and he significantly adds, 'the King is the best paymaster in the country.'¹

¹ *State Papers, East Indies*, September 7, 1613; November, 1614; March, 1615; January 25, 1616; November 26, 1616.

The authority of the Great Mogul was soon to be of service to English interests. At none of the settlements had the Company's servants been more subject to opposition and annoyance than at Surat. At this port the influence of the Portuguese was dominant, and as Portugal, at the very outset of the Company's proceedings, had warmly objected to the establishment of English factories within the dominions to which she was trading, she exercised her power to crush the ascendancy of her rivals. The Governor of Surat, Mocrab Khan, 'whose disposition savoured more of child than man,' pursued a policy very disadvantageous to the English. Though he feared the enmity of the Portuguese, he mistrusted the friendship of the Company, and argued, with characteristic indecision, that if he 'broke' with the former he should be sure of the friendship of neither. Influenced by the suggestions of the Jesuits, who were rapidly becoming a power in the country, under the ardent generalship of Xavier, the governor, 'this malicious wretch' allowed himself to become a complete tool in the hands of the Portuguese. In all disputes between the two nations he at once decided in favour of the Lisbon adventurers. He seized the goods of the English factors, and did what he pleased with them. To prevent all opposition he compelled the English to yield up to him their arms of defence. He used his authority to delay the unlading of English goods, and hampered the merchants on all sides in their purchase of commodities. 'Numerous are the injuries he inflicts upon us,' writes one of the factors, 'discovering the

given to arrest all Portuguese and to seize their goods; the doors of the Portuguese churches were sealed up, the exercise of the Roman Catholic religion forbidden, and Xavier, whom before the Mogul had much liked, was imprisoned. The Portuguese city of Damaun was also closely environed by the troops of the King of Deccan, and its surrender imminent. A third enemy now appeared upon the scene. Captain Downton had anchored his fleet in the roads of Surat, and it struck him that a fitting opportunity had arrived to avenge the humiliations the English had suffered at the hands of the Portuguese. Accordingly he bore down upon the Portuguese fleet, which consisted of nine ships, two galleys, and fifty-eight frigates, and after a brief engagement utterly defeated the enemy; 'many of the gallants of Portugal were killed, besides above 300 men carried in the frigates to Damaun to be buried.' With this victory the Mogul was highly pleased. 'The King,' writes the factor at Ajmere, 'much applauded our people's resolution, saying his country was before them to do therein whatsoever ourselves desired, and spoke very despitefully and reproachfully of the Portuguese.'¹

Upon this arrived Sir Thomas Roe. The English ambassador was evidently a man of bold and vigorous conduct, who brooked no opposition to his demands, and who was not to be defeated by the delays and empty promises of a shuffling policy. In spite of the victories of the English

¹ *State Papers, East Indies*, November 9, 1613; August 19, 1614; January 1, 1615; March, 1615.

and the disgrace into which the 'Portugals' had fallen, the Governor of Surat still continued his irritating course of wounding and humiliating the Company's servants within his jurisdiction. On his arrival at Surat, Roe at once made his 'demands and complaints' to the Governor. 'I come hither,' he said proudly, 'not to beg, nor do nor suffer injury, for I serve a King who is able to revenge whatsoever is dared to be done against his subjects.' He then detailed the injuries complained of, how chests had been ransacked, presents sent to the King taken by violence, servants of merchants cruelly whipped, and every obstacle placed in the way of the development of English commerce. He demanded instant redress, under threat of appealing to the Great Mogul, and concluded by saying that 'I am better resolved to die upon an enemy than to flatter him, and for such I give you notice to take me.'¹ His remonstrance proving ineffectual, the envoy now demanded an interview with the Mogul, when his vigorous disapproval of the conduct of Mocrob Khan carried the day, and the objectionable Governor was removed. The next step of Roe was to pen a severe despatch to the Viceroy of Goa,² complaining of the course pursued by the Portuguese towards the English in the East Indies, and informing him, in the plainest terms, of what would be the result unless such a policy was at once abandoned.

'I am commanded,' he wrote, 'to admonish you to

¹ *State Papers, East Indies*, October 19, 1615.

² *Ibid.* October 20, 1615.

desist from doing what can only bring forth war, revenge, and bloodshed, and to inform you that the English intend nothing but free trade open by the law of nations to all men. It is not the purpose of the English to root out or to hinder your trade, or to impeach the receipt of your revenues, and it is strange you should dare to infringe upon the free commerce between their masters and subjects. Let me advise your barbarous miscellaneous people to use more reverent terms of the majesty of a Christian king. I give you further notice that his Majesty is resolved to maintain his subjects in their honest endeavours in spite of any enemy, and to that purpose has sent me to conclude a league with the Great Mogul for ever, in which I am commanded to offer you comprisure, and will wait your answer at Ajmere forty days. In case of your refusal or silence, letters of reprisal will be granted to make war upon you in all parts of the Indies.' He concludes, 'Your friend or enemy at your own choice.'

No reply was received to this ultimatum, and Roe pronounced 'open war against the Portugals in the East Indies with fire and sword, in the name of the King of England.' The English ambassador soon proved himself the most fitting agent that could have been sent out to uphold the interests of the Company. He became the confidential friend of the Great Mogul, and was the means of cementing a cordial alliance between England and 'the Mogores country.' He had all the proclamations forbidding the factories at Surat and Ahmedabad to trade rescinded. He procured firmans

encouraging English commerce throughout the country. He recovered all the extortions which had been exacted from the Company's servants by sundry unjust governors, and in order to leave 'all matters in a good, settled, and peaceful course,' he drew up twenty-one articles, regulating the conduct of English trade in the East, most of which he succeeded in having confirmed by the Mogul. In the following letter, now for the first time brought to light through the labours of Mr. Sainsbury, we have a plain proof of the feelings entertained by the monarch of the Mogores towards England, and of his appreciation of the conduct of Sir Thomas Roe. We have modernised the spelling of the ambassador's translation from the Arabic.¹

'The Great Mogul to King James I.

'When your Majesty shall open your letter, let your royal heart be as fresh as a sweet garden. Let all people make reverence at your gate; let your throne be advanced high and amongst the greatest of the kings of the prophet Jesus; let your Majesty be the greatest, and all monarchs derive their counsel and wisdom from thy breast as from a fountain, that the love of the majesty of Jesus may revive and flourish under thy protection.

'The letter of love and friendship which you sent me, and the presents, token of your good affection toward me, I have received by the hand of your ambassador, Sir Thomas

¹ *State Papers, East Indies*, No. 525, 1618 [?].

Roe (who well deserves to be your trusty servant), delivered to me in an acceptable and happy hour, upon which my eyes were so fixed that I could not easily remove them to any other object, and have accepted them with great joy and delight, upon which assurance of your royal love I have given my general command to all the kingdoms and posts of my dominions to receive all the merchants of the English nation as the subjects of my friend, that in what place soever they choose to live in they may have reception and residence to their own contents and safety; and what goods soever they desire to sell or buy they may have full liberty without restraint; and at what port soever they shall arrive, that neither Spaniard, Portugal, nor any other shall dare to molest their quiet; and in what city soever they shall have residence I have commanded my governors and captains to give them freedoms answerable to their own desires to sell, buy, or to transport into their country at their pleasures. For confirmation of our love and friendship, I desire your Majesty to command your merchants to bring in their ships of all sorts of rarities and rich goods fit for my palaces; and that you be pleased to send your royal letters by every opportunity, that I may rejoice in your health and prosperous affairs, and that our friendship may be interchangeable and eternal. Your Majesty is learned and quick-sighted as a prophet, and can conceive much by few words that I need not to write more. The great God of heaven give us increase of honour !'.

It was natural that the success which had attended upon

the operations of the English Company in opening commercial relations with every country of importance in the East should have excited the hostile jealousy of those European nations which now found themselves confronted within their own special province by a most formidable rival. With the enmity of Spain and Portugal England was perfectly prepared to cope; on the numerous occasions when English interests in the East were affected by Spanish or Portuguese intrigues, the despatches of the Company were powerfully seconded by the guns of our fleet, stationed in Indian waters, and the machinations of the enemy were speedily brought to nought. The treacherous amity of Holland was, however, an obstacle of a far more serious character in the path of the Company's progress. In the second volume of Mr. Sainsbury's interesting work, the majority of the letters that he has calendared refer to the inimical conduct of the Dutch and to their persistent efforts to displace the English from all their most profitable settlements in the East Indies. Much of the wealth of Holland was derived from her prosperous factories on the coast of India and in the islands around the peninsula, and though peace reigned between the two countries the Dutch had no idea of seeing themselves ousted from a lucrative trade by the energy and diplomacy of England. Accordingly Holland used all her arts to poison the minds of the natives against the English settlers, to interfere with the dealings of English trade, and, where she safely dared, to oppose the Company's servants by actual force. Indeed, so grave

became her animosity, that at last, in the autumn of 1618, the East India Company drew up two formal declarations of complaints, one of which was presented to the King, the other to the Privy Council.

In these documents the Company complained of 'the efforts of the Hollanders to dispossess them by force' of many places in the East Indies; 'of their most outrageous behaviour, as any mortal enemies could do,' in seizing certain of the Company's vessels, imprisoning the crews, 'and showing our chained men to the people of the isle of Neira, the mother of the isles of Banda, saying, "Lo! these are the men whom ye made your gods, in whom ye put your trust, but we have made them our slaves;"' of 'their threatening mortal war against any English who dare trade to the Moluccas;' of their robbing the Chinese under English colours 'to bring us into hatred and contempt;' and of their endeavours to disgrace the English nation by openly going about boasting that 'one Holland ship would take ten English, that they care not for our King, for St. George was now turned child.' These declarations were, by the King's command, sent to the English ambassador at the Hague, who was required to present them to the States-General, and 'to demand their answers how far they will allow these insolencies of their subjects, or how they will punish them and make reparation; and to insist particularly that they send commissioners articulately instructed to give satisfaction at the treaty to be instantly held between us and them.'

Into the negotiations that ensued, which lasted more than

seven months, it is needless for us to enter ; a clear and succinct account of all the proceedings that took place will be found fully calendared in the second volume of Mr. Sainsbury's work.¹ From the numerous despatches of the English ambassador at the Hague, and from the constant instructions that were sent out to him from Whitehall, we see the exact working of the King's mind at this contentious period ; whilst the valuable court minutes of the East India Company admit us into the very confidence of the governing body of the English Company, and lay before us every detail connected with these proceedings. After numerous delays a ' treaty between the English and the Dutch concerning trade in the East Indies ' was concluded June 2, 1619.

The Company had now been established some eighteen years ; and, in looking back upon their past efforts, the directors had every reason to congratulate themselves upon their good fortune. Thanks to the protection of the Great Mogul, the factors of the East India Company were the most active in the peninsula of India. In Siam and the islands of the Celebes Sea the prosperity of the English had aroused the fiercest animosity of the Dutch, who until then had enjoyed a monopoly of the trade in those regions. From Japan, in spite of the hatred of its Emperor towards Christians, silver, copper, and iron were being freely obtained. Permission had been given by exclusive China to the English to send annually two ships to Foochow for the purpose of trading with the Celestials. With Persia the Company

¹ *State Papers, East Indies*, 1617-1621.

transacted a large business by exchanging cloth, tin, brass, and sword-blades for silks, damasks, spices, velvets, satins, and fruits. Not a State of importance east of the Red Sea excluded the English from her ports, or, when native prejudice had been removed, objected to the development of commercial relations with the 'white infidels.' The foes of the Company were among the civilised powers of the West, not among the barbarians of the East.

An alliance was, however, now to be effected with one former opponent. Negotiations had for some time been on foot between Russia and England with regard to the opening of the Volga to English merchandise destined for Persia. The 'Duke of Russia,' though he had always opposed the proceedings of our Company, was anxious to stand well with England, for he was burdened with debts, and he knew that in no capital could he so easily be furnished with a loan as in London. He despatched an ambassador with an imposing retinue to James, and the papers before us offer an interesting account of the reception of the northern envoy.¹ Sunday afternoon was appointed for the interview. The King and Queen, accompanied by a large suite, were seated in the banqueting house at Whitehall. The ambassador was driven from Crosby House, Bishopsgate Street, where he lodged, in one of the state coaches, but his retinue refused to enter the carriages appointed for them, 'alleging servants ought to be known from their lords, and that it was fit they should go afoot.' On entering the hall the ambassador, with four of

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, March 26, 1618.

his chief followers, bowed low to the ground, kissing it, and then approached the royal circle and kissed hands. We are informed that, whilst in the performance of this act of homage, the envoy and his retinue 'looked up no higher than the hand they were to kiss, which so soon as kissed, presently ran back with all the speed they could. In going forwards they put their left hand on their breech behind, and used gesture and fashion very strange and unusual in these parts.'

The envoy was treated with every distinction. Banquets were given in his honour, crowds cheered his coach as it passed through the City to Whitehall, and everything connected with himself and his retinue was listened to with avidity. The presents he brought from the north were much admired, 'the very furs being estimated by those that are skilful at better than 6,000 pounds.' These were received very graciously by the King, who expressed himself as much pleased with them, 'and the more when he understood Queen Elizabeth never had such a present thence.' Yet the mission ended in a diplomatic triumph for Russia. A treaty of amity and peace was entered into between the two countries; a sum of 60,000 marks was advanced to the Duke of Russia, 'towards the maintenance of his wars against the Poles;' but the one great request of the East India Company was refused. Russia, from the facilities offered her by her geographical situation, carried on a large trade with Persia, and she had always watched with jealousy the progress of the Company's dealings with Abbas Mirza. Accordingly she now refused to grant to the English

‘the free passage for the silks of Persia up the Volga.’ Still, not wishing to appear ungrateful, she agreed, short of permitting Persian goods to pass through her territories for the benefit of English commerce and to the detriment of her own merchants, not to interfere with the proceedings of the Company, and to remove the obstacles as to ‘the trade in cordage and other real commodities,’ which she had formerly been active in preventing.

Disappointed in their object, the Company now ‘contracted with the King of Persia to bring their silks by the Persian Gulf, paying one-third in money and two-thirds in commodities.’ From these volumes we see how profitable was the trade with the East. Commodities from the East Indies were brought to England at a quarter of the price hitherto paid in Turkey and Lisbon. Pepper alone to the value of 200,000*l.* was imported into England in 1623, nine-tenths of which was exported within twelve months. It was estimated that the commerce of the Company with the East would maintain 10,000 tons of shipping, and employ 2,500 mariners and as many artisans. In 1622 the trade to the East Indies brought in a revenue to the King of 40,000*l.*, which in 1624 increased to 50,000*l.* When we read that the goods which had been bought in India for 356,288*l.* produced in England no less a sum than 1,914,600*l.*, we are not surprised at the large dividends paid by the Company, and the eagerness of the proudest peers of the realm to be enrolled—like Lord Bacon—as shareholders.

This dazzling prosperity was soon to be overshadowed by

one of the foulest massacres which a high-spirited nation has ever permitted to remain unavenged. The treaty between England and Holland with regard to the trade in the East Indies turned out, as had been foreseen, practically useless. Within a couple of years of its ratification, the old jealousies were again at work, the old disputes again broke out, and it again became necessary to attempt to settle the differences by fresh negotiations. Both sides complained of 'the insufferable wrongs' they had to endure, and each was loud in the protestations of its own innocence. According to the East India Company, the Dutch had flagrantly broken the treaty of 1619; they had not restored the goods they had taken from the English, but had imported them instead to the Netherlands; they had 'imprisoned, imposed fines, inflicted corporal punishment in the market-place, and kept in irons the English;' they would not suffer the English to buy merchandise until the Dutch had been first served; they imposed 'great taxes and tolls upon English goods, and levied great fines for non-payment;' they prevented the English from trading in the Moluccas, Banda, and Amboyna; they pressed the English 'to pay their proportion in money towards maintaining the forts and garrisons in those islands, notwithstanding they have no trade there;' and they required the English to furnish a ship to remain in the Moluccas for a whole year, contrary to the articles of the treaty. In reply the Dutch complained that the English Company had neglected to maintain the ships of defence as had been agreed upon, that the English interfered unlaw-

fully with the trade of the Dutch in the Spice Islands, and that, as for the specific charges brought forward by the Company, they were 'so obscure, confused, and ill-prepared,' that it was impossible to return a satisfactory answer.

England, however, determined at first to tolerate no shuffling in the matter. Our ambassador at the Hague was informed that unless commissioners were sent from the States to London, to redress the grievances complained of, and enter into a new treaty, the English would have 'letters of reprisal against Dutch ships, for that his Majesty had sworn his subjects would not let him rest until he had granted them.' The prospect of this alternative roused Holland from her apathy, and on November 28, 1621, ambassadors from the States arrived in London, and negotiations were at once opened with certain lords of the Privy Council, who were appointed by the King lords commissioners for the treaty. The proceedings were most tedious and protracted. Conferences were held and then suddenly broke up, owing to the 'wayward proceedings' of the Dutch commissioners. Committees sat, but so futile and barren of result were the proposals to be discussed that the chairman, the Lord Treasurer, tore up the minutes in a passion, and 'cut off all further negotiations, saying that he knew how to spend his time better.' 'Scandalous words,' too, we are informed, passed between the merchants on both sides, and on one occasion the papers laid before the Lords Commissioners were so very personal in their nature, that they were ordered to be destroyed. At length, after numerous delays and hot disputes,

a treaty was signed January 30, 1623. It consisted of fourteen articles, the chief of which were that neither of the rival companies was to grant letters of marque against each other, that there was to be perfect freedom of traffic between the two, that the natives were not to be supplied by either company with arms or other munition of war, that the expenses of the Council of Defence were to be borne equally by both companies, and that all the articles of the treaty of 1619 were to be observed. 'Such,' writes John Chamberlain, with a sneer at the conditions to be observed, 'is the hard knot which it has taken from thirteen to fourteen months to tie. Our East India Company will never be the better for it.'¹

Whilst these matters were being settled, 'bloudy newes from the East Indies' reached our shores. It was said that the English at Amboyna had been cruelly put to death by the Dutch, on the pretence of being guilty of treasonable proceedings. The story in circulation throughout London was as follows.² A Japanese soldier in the service of the Dutch was observed in conversation with a sentinel then on guard by the castle walls at Amboyna, as to the strength of the castle and the character of the people who garrisoned it. He was arrested upon suspicion of treason and put to the torture, when he confessed that he and others of his countrymen were to have contrived the taking of the castle. The Japanese in Amboyna were seized and at once tortured;

¹ *State Papers, East Indies*, 1622-1624.

² *Ibid.* Carleton to Sec. Conway, May 28, 1624.

these, unable to bear their sufferings, and at the instigation of their tormentors, now asserted that in their attempt to capture the castle they were to have been assisted by the English residing there. Upon this suggested confession, Captain Towerson and all the English in Amboyna were sent for by the governor, and after being accused of a conspiracy to surprise the castle, were informed that they would be kept prisoners for further examination. The next day the English factors in the neighbourhood were arrested and brought in irons to Amboyna.

It appears that there was confined in the castle a dissolute Englishman, one Abel Price, a surgeon, who had been imprisoned for attempting, in a drunken fit, to set fire to the house of a Dutchman. This man was now threatened by the authorities with the same tortures as had been applied to the Japanese, unless he swore to corroborate all the statements that had been made against the English. For a short time Price manfully held out against the terrors of the torture-chamber, but, on pain overcoming his scruples, he confessed what was desired of him. The English factors were then separately confronted with Price and accused of treachery. They one and all indignantly denied the charges brought against them, and loudly protested their innocence. Upon their persistent refusal to convict themselves they were led to the cells below and put to the torture. From the State Papers before us we are made acquainted with the sufferings they had on these occasions to endure.¹ On entering the torture-

¹ *State Papers, East Indies*, 'Narration of the bloody proceedings at Amboyna,' July 10, 1624.

chamber each prisoner was first 'hoisted by the hands, with a cord attached to his wrists, upon a large door, where he was made fast to two staples of iron fixed on both sides at the top of the doorposts, his hands being hauled, the one from the other, as wide as they could stretch.' Thus secured, his feet, which were suspended some two feet from the ground, were 'stretched asunder as far as they could reach, and so made fast beneath on each side of the doorposts.' A cloth was then bound round the lower part of the face of the victim, tight at the throat and loose at the nose. Water was now poured gently upon the head, until the cloth was full to the mouth and nostrils, so that the prisoner could not draw breath without sucking in the water, 'which, being continually poured in, came out of the nose, ears, and eyes, causing the greatest agony, till he became insensible.' This result attained, the tortured man was taken down quickly and made to vomit the water. Occasionally these torments were varied by incisions being made in the breasts of the unhappy captives, which were filled with powder and then ignited.

In this fiendish manner, we read, some of the factors were tortured 'three or four times, until their bodies were frightfully swollen, their cheeks like great bladders, and their eyes starting out of their heads.' One John Clarke, a factor at Hitto, we are told, bore all his sufferings without confessing anything, upon which the Dutch fiscal said he must be a devil or a witch, and have some charm about him that he could bear so much. 'So they cut his hair very short, and, hoisting him up again as before, they burnt the bottoms of

his feet with lighted candles until the fat dropped from them ; they also burnt the palms of his hands and under his armpits, until his inwards might evidently be seen.' At last, wearied and overcome by these tortures, Clarke confessed all that was suggested to him, 'to wit, that Captain Towerson had sworn all the English, with the help of the Japanese, to surprise the castle of Amboyna and put the governor and all the Dutchmen to death.' His statement was corroborated by most of the other factors, who were prepared to admit anything in order to terminate the horrible torments they had to suffer.

Against this cumulative evidence the assertions of Captain Towerson that he was perfectly innocent of the charges brought against him were in vain. 'He was led up into the place of examination, and two great jars of water carried after him. What he there did or suffered was unknown to the rest of the English, but he was made to underwrite his confession there.' These examinations, tortures, and confessions were the work of eight days—from February 15 to February 23—and on February 26, 1623, all the prisoners were brought into the great hall of the castle, and solemnly condemned to death. Their last moments were worthy of the nation to which they belonged, and of the religion which they professed. Each man 'went one to another, begging forgiveness for their false accusation, being wrung from them by the pains of torture. And they all freely forgave one another, for none had been so falsely accused, but he himself had accused another as falsely.'

The night before execution was passed in prayer, the prisoners turning a deaf ear to the offers of their Dutch guards, who bade them 'drink lustily and drive away their sorrow.' Early in the morning they were led out into the castle yard, and the sentence of death read to them. Before 'suffering the fatal stroke' the condemned 'prayed and charged those that were saved to bear witness to their friends in England of their innocency, and that they died not traitors, but so many innocents, merely murdered by the Hollanders, whom they prayed God to forgive their blood-thirstiness, and to have mercy upon their souls.' Ten Englishmen, one Portuguese, and nine Japanese were then executed with the sword, and all the English save Captain Towerson were buried in one pit. The day following the execution was spent by the Dutch in public rejoicing for their deliverance from this pretended plot.

When the news of the Amboyna massacre reached England the greatest excitement prevailed. The nation cried out loudly for revenge, and our ambassador at the Hague was instructed to demand reparation from the Dutch. At a court meeting of the Company three points were resolved on—justice against the murderers, reparation for injuries, and a separation of the two companies. And now ensued one of the most ignominious chapters to be found in the history of English diplomacy. The States General declined to be convinced that our version of the story was the correct one; they upheld the conduct of their agents. It was the English who had attempted to seize the castle of Amboyna; their

designs had been frustrated, and the ringleaders of the plot had been deservedly executed. It was true that the English prisoners had been tortured, but the accounts that had been circulated of their sufferings had been much exaggerated. Nor was it for England, sneered the States General, where men were pressed to death for political crimes, to cry out against the punishment of torture. The Dutch proceedings in Amboyna, argued the Hollanders, were neither against justice nor without formality, and certainly not with extremity against the conspirators.¹

In reply England stated that the factors condemned to death were 'not conspirators; the men were innocent of any designs against the governor of Amboyna, and only accused each other of imaginary crimes to escape the torments of torture. It was evident upon the very face of it, she said, that this pretended attack was impossible for the English to execute. The castle of Amboyna was of great strength, it was garrisoned by some 200 men, whilst living in the town were as many more of their free burghers. 'Durst ten English, whereof not one a soldier, attempt anything upon such strength and vigilancy?' Whilst as for the assistance of the Japanese, 'they were but ten neither, and all unarmed as well as the English!' And suppose, it was argued, that these twenty persons had been so desperate as to venture the exploit, how could they be able either to master the Dutch in the castle or to keep possession when they had gotten it? What seconds had they at hand? There was neither ship nor pinnace of the

¹ *State Papers, East Indies*, Barlow to Carleton, August 5, 1624.

English in the harbour, and not an Englishman to be found within forty leagues of Amboyna to render assistance. The idea was as mad in its conception as it was impossible in its execution. Whilst, on the other hand, in addition to the strength of the castle and town of Amboyna, the Dutch had three other strong castles well furnished with soldiers in the same island and at Cambello adjoining. They had vast stores of arms and ammunition, and lying at anchor in the roads of Amboyna were eight men-of-war. Was it probable, said the English Commissioners, that a few unarmed men would contend to overthrow such a power? ¹

Still, the States General maintained that the conduct of their East India Company, if not perfectly blameless in the matter, was not very guilty. They would institute an inquiry into the affair, and punish the offenders if found to be deserving of punishment, but they declined to make the humiliating reparation required of them. Those who wish to study despatches full of bluster and evasion have only to read the third volume of Mr. Sainsbury's Calendar, where the history of the negotiations that took place on this occasion is for the first time made public. The King vowed vengeance, but his ire spent itself in idle threats. He declared that by August 12, 1624, he would have satisfaction 'both for the slaughter of our people and the spoil of our goods.' Yet said Governor Abbott, in full court of the Company, 'the day is come and past, and we have heard

¹ *State Papers, East Indies*, 'An answer to the Dutch relation touching the pretended conspiracy of the English at Amboyna,' September [?], 1624.

nothing.' His Majesty swore that unless reparation was made he would attack the Dutch ships in the Channel, but no orders were issued for the English fleet to stand out to sea to attack the enemy. The truth was that the treaties between England and the United Provinces, who were then fighting against Spanish dominion in the Netherlands, rendered it most undesirable that a rupture should take place between the Courts of St James's and the Hague. England fancied that she was avenging the insult done to her flag by a bluster which deceived no one, and threats which caused no apprehension.

'And thus the matter rested,' writes Mr. Sainsbury, 'three months after King James had ceased to reign; and though efforts were made from time to time by his successor to see justice done, which were renewed again and again during the interregnum, and even in Charles the Second's reign, whenever any treaty between England and the United Provinces was in question, so the matter rested.'

THE GATHERING OF THE STORM.

There was ambition, there was sedition, there was violence ; but no man shall persuade me that it was not the cause of Liberty on one side and of Tyranny on the other.—LORD CHATHAM.

The right divine of kings to govern wrong.

The Dunciad, Book IV.

SHORTLY after the year 1625 had dawned upon the world the condition of James the First caused much anxiety to those in attendance upon him. After slowly recovering from a severe attack of the gout, he had fallen a victim to tertian ague. No immediate danger was apprehended, but the King, who had always been nervous about himself where his health was concerned, took a graver view of his illness than did those around him, and said, 'I shall never see London more.' Remembering that Buckingham had derived great benefit from the prescription of a country doctor at Dunmow, James was now anxious to adopt the same remedies. A messenger rode post haste into Essex, and brought back the village quack's recommendation. The King was to be kept in bed, to be given a posset, which would promote perspiration, and to have a plaster placed upon his stomach and his wrists. The advice was faithfully carried out, but instead of relieving

the invalid, only aggravated his malady. The Court physicians, irritated at this interference with their treatment, declined to visit the King unless he would place himself unreservedly in their hands, and abandon the Dunmow posset and plasters. A returning fit of great severity now compelled James to listen to his recognised medical attendants, and under their skill and care his health began gradually to mend. But with regaining vigour came back the short-sighted obstinacy which had always been one of the evil features in his character. In spite of all opposition the King resolved to give the Dunmow treatment another trial. Once more he poured down his throat the posset, and applied the plasters to his stomach and his wrists; from that hour the improvement that had taken place in his condition became checked, and he grew rapidly worse. Fit succeeded fit, and it was evident to all the end was nigh. The divines in attendance upon the royal bedside told the sufferer that his recovery was now despaired of. 'I am satisfied,' said James, 'and I pray you to assist me to make ready to go away hence to Christ, whose mercies I call for, and I hope to find them.' On March 27, 1625, he passed away. 'He died at twelve at noon,' writes Chambermayd to the Queen of Bohemia, 'and before six at night the accession of King Charles was proclaimed, and all persons commanded to see the King's peace duly kept, and to be obedient to his laws.'

Of the young King little was known. Shy, reserved, and accustomed to stand much upon his dignity, except to the very few friends who possessed his confidence, as Prince of Wales Charles had never come prominently before the nation.

The grasp of his mind was limited, he had many prejudices and few ideas, the flow of his thoughts was slow and laboured, and he was by nature reticent and reserved. Conscious that his gifts did not tend to shed a lustre upon his father's Court, he had held himself aloof from its more boisterous festivities, and from the homage of the vulgar. The loquacity, the pedantry, the vanity of his coarse self-asserting sire jarred upon the sensitiveness of the young Prince, and caused him to withdraw from the society of those who by their servile flatteries had wormed themselves into the intimacies of the throne. The select and limited few, however, who had been afforded the opportunities of judging the character of Charles were strongly impressed in his favour. He was not a ready talker, but when he spoke he showed that he was able to bring to bear upon the subject under discussion, if not much original thought, at least much reading. He had a keen appreciation of the fine arts, and in his travels on the Continent had struck those who surrounded him by the depth and judgment of the criticisms he passed upon the different paintings that met his view. In an age of much licence he had worn the white flower of a blameless life, and had been sneered at by the wits of Versailles as being as virgin as his sword. So far as externals went Nature had been most kind to him. His face was expressive, and the features marked by that purity and refinement which are termed aristocratic; his figure was graceful, his manners, though somewhat haughty, were eminently courtly and winning. As it was said of his unhappy descendant, the Young

Pretender, on his first entrance into Edinburgh, so it could be said of Charles, he was 'not only a king but a gentleman.'

His accession to the throne had occurred at a season which required no ordinary capacity to contend with the surrounding difficulties. Both at home and abroad dark clouds had sprung up, obscuring the political horizon. On the Continent England was engaged in a war to oppose the might of the Austrian family, and to recover the Palatinate. Spain, irritated at the rupture of the marriage-treaty between Charles and the Infanta had become our bitter enemy. France, though she had consented to the union of the Princess Henrietta with the young King of England, hovered between her hatred of Spain and her hatred of the Huguenots, and declined to give any decided support to the English policy in Europe. Whilst at home the opposition of the House of Commons to the claims of Prerogative, which had embittered the relationship between the Crown and the people during the latter part of the preceding reign, was now again being mischievously agitated. To add to these difficulties, the question of religious toleration was demanding an immediate settlement. Shortly after his accession Charles had united himself in marriage with the Princess Henrietta Maria, the daughter of Henry IV. of France, whose beauty, it is said, had attracted him at a ball in Paris, whilst *en route* for Madrid to pay his court to the Spanish Infanta. The young Queen was a devoted Catholic, and it was expected that her elevation to the English throne would result in the removal

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of those penalties and restrictions which at that time visited severely upon the adherents of the Holy See.

These hopes resolved themselves into certainty when the private views of the King became known. On the day of his marriage he had issued instructions to the Lord Keeper 'to cease all manner of prosecution against Roman Catholics, as well on their persons as goods, for the exercise of the said religion, provided always that they behaved themselves moderately therein, and yield us that obedience which good and true subjects owe unto their King.' It was soon found, however, that in the present temper of the English people it would be most unwise to carry these concessions into effect. The war in the Palatinate and the attitude assumed by the Huguenots had aroused both the Protestant sympathies and jealousies of the nation. Throughout England the recent alliance with France was looked upon coldly, men fearing that the union had been purchased at the expense of the established religion of the country. Charles, at the very outset of his marriage and in the face of his instructions to the Lord Keeper, was bidden to put in force the statutes for the suppression of Popery, really to 'execute the laws against the wicked generation of Jesuits, seminary priests, and incendiaries ever lying in wait to blow the coal of contention.' He hesitated and dallied with the demand, hoping that time might extricate him from the embarrassment.

Nor did the conduct of the young Queen tend to smooth over the difficulties of the situation. Her beauty was acknowledged by both friend and foe, yet from such brilliant personal

attractions much danger was to be apprehended. It was known that the King was deeply attached to her, that his disposition caused him to give an undue weight to the counsels of those by whom his affections were engaged ; and it was felt that the influence of his young and beautiful consort might be very detrimental to the activity of Protestantism. Henrietta had surrounded herself by a little band of advisers of her own creed, to whom she always referred before entering on any act, private or political. At the instigation of her confessor she had made a pilgrimage across Hyde Park to the gallows at Tyburn, where she had prayed to the Catholic victims executed there in the preceding reigns, as to so many saints and martyrs. She had declined to be crowned by the Archbishop of Canterbury, but had requested that the ceremony might be performed by her own bishop, which had been refused. 'His Majesty was yesterday crowned,' writes Sir Benjamin Rudyard. 'The Queen was not crowned (her Church not recognising our bishops), but stood in a window at Sir Abraham Williams's to see the show.' The feelings of the people were excited against her, and she was called a Daughter of Heth, a Canaanite, and an Idolater.

So pernicious was the influence of her advisers that at last it became imperatively necessary for the King to interfere. Attended upon by the Duke of Buckingham and the Earls of Holland and Carlisle, Charles came to Somerset House, where the retinue of the Queen had assembled to await his orders. 'Gentlemen and ladies,' said the King, 'I am driven to that necessity as that I am personally come to acquaint you that

I very earnestly desire your return into France ; true it is the deportment of some amongst you hath been inoffensive to me, but others again have so dallied with my patience and so highly affronted me as I cannot, I will not, longer endure it.' In vain certain of the officials of the Queen's household raised their voices in earnest protestation against this summary dismissal ; they were ordered to quit the kingdom and not to irritate further the royal will. 'On Tuesday,' writes Sir Benjamin Rudyard, 'the Queen's French attendants were suddenly commanded to quit the Court ; the Queen takes the act very passionately, but having prevailed for the return of her nurse, is reasonably pacified.' With the departure of her mischievous advisers the influences that had been at work to create a breach between husband and wife were silenced, and the domestic life of Charles, which at one time had been gravely threatened by the bigotry and obstinacy of the Queen, was restored to that harmony and affection which ever afterwards characterised it.

Whilst these private differences were being settled matters of great public moment had made large claims upon the temper and discretion of the young King. Into the thrice-told story of the reign of Charles we have no intention of entering, except as a new light is shed upon it by disclosures from the State Papers. On June 18, 1625, the King opened his first Parliament at Westminster. In his speech from the throne he frankly acknowledged the necessities of his position ; he had received on his accession the legacy of a war approved of by the nation ; he had entered

into arrangements with Denmark, the Low Countries, and the Palatinate, which made heavy calls upon his exchequer; he had spent large sums upon the navy; the debts of his father remained still to be discharged; and he confidently expected his faithful Commons to freely vote him the supplies he required. His confidence was misplaced. In the Lower House the leaders of the country party were the dominant section. They ruled the assembly, and gave the tone to the debate. To these men the situation of their Sovereign was full of promise for the redress of grievances they had long complained of. They resolved that the power of Parliament should be re-established, and the prerogative reduced within more reasonable limits. They required that the Penal Acts against the Roman Catholics should be put in force, and demanded that full information as to the future expenditure of the sums to be voted should be laid before the House. To these requests the King declined to give any decided answer, and the Commons retaliated by voting two miserable subsidies to meet the heavy expenses incurred by the Crown.

For the moment, all negotiations between the Sovereign and his subjects were brought to an end by the hasty adjournment of the Parliament, owing to the plague which was then devastating the metropolis. Of the havoc made by this terrible visitation the State Papers are full. Entry after entry in the Calendars¹ before us reveals the terror

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, 1625-1640, edited by John Bruce and W. Douglas Hamilton, 14 vols.

and distress caused by its appearance. 'The plague spreads, Parliament is in suspense;' 'the sickness in London increases in a remarkable manner;' 'the sickness has spread into all parts of the City, and has broken out in the house of the Lord Mayor;' 'the sickness increases more and more, the bill specified 500 and odd last week;' 'the increase and general spread of the plague in London and Westminster cause such distraction and consternation that the like was never seen in that age. The number of deaths for four weeks was answerable to those in the first year of the late King, but this last week it is near a thousand greater, which makes all men hasten away;' 'a few days since there died two of the sickness at Windsor, in a house where the Queen's priest was lodged: it is very much about Kingston and its neighbourhood;' 'the sickness so violent in London that there is no intercourse of boats from Kingston, those that go to London must not return into the country. Last week's deaths were 4,855; of the plague 4,133, not counting Westminster and the outlying parishes, where there died about 1,000;' 'few adventure into London: the Lords are about to send to the Mayor that the infected shall be sent out of the City to tents and cabins in the fields. No man comes into a town without a ticket, yet there are few places free;' 'Sir Francis Howard's lady took the infection from a new gown she had from London, so as she died the same day she took it.' 'I believe,' writes the Dean of St. Paul's, 'that in the City of London, and in a mile compass there died 1,000 a day. The citizens fled away as out of a

house on fire, and stuffed their pockets with their best ware and threw themselves into the highways, and were not received so much as into barns, and perished so; some of them with more money about them than would have bought the village where they died.'

And then we read how the fell visitation spread in spite of all precaution, from county to county, and town to town, till the whole kingdom was infected; how trade was paralysed, how piteous were the applications to the authorities for relief, and how stringent were the regulations for the prevention of the disease. 'On deaths of persons of the contagion of the sickness,' write the Justices of the Peace for Westminster, 'the searchers go with white wands in their hands, the red cross, and the bill "Lord have mercie upon us" set apparent on the doors. With every such house there is a warder, and every day some of the Justices visit and examine to see them do their duty. They be so kept up forty days, and in that time purge and cleanse their houses with lime and such-like.' From the State Papers we collect the following table of mortality: In 1592, the interments from the plague were 11,505; in 1603, 30,583; in 1625, 35,428; in 1630, 1,317; in 1636, 12,102; in 1637 down to the end of July, when the disease was beginning to slacken its ravages, the number of deaths had been 2,876.

To escape infection the Parliament met at Oxford, and Charles, nothing daunted by past failure, again appealed to the generosity of the Commons. He had scarcely the means to supply the necessary provisions for the Royal household.

He was about to equip a fleet against Spain. He had to pay large subsidies to the King of Denmark, to the army of Kamfeldt, to the army of the Low Countries, and for the security of Ireland. It was necessary if the war was to be carried on that large supplies should be voted. In his appeal Charles was supported by all the arguments and specious eloquence of his admirers. The Commons, however, declined to reconsider their decision. They had been angered by an attempt on the part of the Court to employ certain English vessels (which had been despatched to Dieppe ostensibly to attack the Genoese) in the service of the French king against the Huguenots of Rochelle : a design which had only been frustrated by the mutiny and desertion of the crews. They again demanded to know how the past subsidies had been expended, and requested a full and detailed account of the warlike operations that were meditated by the Court. If the King gave them his confidence and accepted their advice, they would then see how far they would be justified in meeting the Royal wishes. The struggle was thus between the inquisitorial power of Parliament and the despotism of Prerogative. Charles declined to recognise the pretensions of his Parliament ; he placed his confidence in his Ministers, and not in the representatives of the people : it was the duty of the Commons to obey, and not to pry into the commands of their Sovereign ; to place the right of inquiry in the hands of Parliament was to accord a favour most detrimental to the interests of the Crown. Holding these views, and finding that no

object was to be gained by further discussion, the King took advantage of the appearance of the plague at Oxford to dissolve the Houses.

With the vast mass of documentary evidence now before us it is not difficult to account for the opposition of the Commons to the demands of the Crown. In the Lower House there were men hostile to the Royal Prerogative, and who were anxious to embrace every opportunity of inflicting slights and humiliations upon their Sovereign, but they were in a minority. To the larger section of the assembly the Throne was still the emblem of all that was sacred and dear, and opposition to the Sovereign did not so much imply disloyalty as hate and distrust of the mischievous adviser who then enjoyed the Royal confidence. The leaders of the country party did not war against Charles, but against Buckingham. It has been the fate of many who have exercised supreme sway, either in the Court or the Cabinet, to encounter the bitter hostility of a people; but seldom has any Minister met with such fierce detestation as was then excited by the conduct of Buckingham. About the middle of the last reign a younger son of an old Leicestershire family had come up to Court, and had purchased the office of cup-bearer. Few men were more impressed by the external advantages of a handsome person and an elegant address than James. It was not long before the graceful bearing, the winning manner, and the charming face of George Villiers attracted the attention of his Sovereign. The young cup-bearer was not one of those who lose an opportunity; he

speedily ingratiated himself in the good opinion of his master, and his rise was rapid. The favourite Somerset was, as we know, dethroned and dismissed, and George Villiers reigned in his stead. Honour after honour was rapidly conferred upon him; office after office was entrusted to him. He was knighted; he was created Baron Whaddon and Viscount Villiers; he was created Earl of Buckingham; he was created Marquis, and then Duke of Buckingham. He had been sworn of the Council, he had received the insignia of the Garter, he was Master of the Horse, he was Lord High Admiral, and he was the bosom friend and trusted counsellor of his Sovereign.

A man made only to shine in the salon and the boudoir, the power now placed in the hands of Buckingham turned his head. His arrogance, his abuse of authority, his dangerous counsels, offended all. He was hated with the bitterest of all hates, the hate that knows it is powerless to wound. Neither James nor Charles would listen to a word said against the favourite. It was useless for men grown grey in the service of the State to expose the incapacity of Buckingham for the high offices he filled—to point out the mischief he had effected between England and Spain, and to show how he was wanting in tact, foresight, and discretion. James turned a deaf ear to all such insinuations, and continued to be fonder than ever of his 'Steenie.' As was the sire, so was the son. On the accession of Charles to the throne, Buckingham was the adviser who guided the Royal policy. 'During Buckingham's presence at Court,' writes Mr. Bruce, 'he

reigned there as the King's absolute and single Minister. Every act of the Government passed by or through his will. Except formally, the King was little seen or heard of in State affairs. He seldom even attended a sitting of the Privy Council, except to carry out some project of his favourite.'

It was this elevation of a dangerous and domineering incapacity that had so angered the Commons, and forced them into a disloyalty they regretted, in order to curb the mischievous activity of the one adviser of the Crown. By the nation at large the favourite was as much hated as was Bute in the days of George the Third. He was a traitor, a Papist, a poisoner, a Frenchman, the cause of England's heavy taxation, and of all her distresses. Such were the accusations brought against the Duke by an infuriated people. 'The whole island,' writes one Gabriel Browne, 'is so sharpened against him, that even ridiculous toys inflame them with offence. The multitude were bitterly disgusted because, being sickly, he suffered himself to be carried in a covered chair upon his servant's shoulders from Whitehall to Denmark House; and the Commons House took it ill, because, at a Committee, he was a little more gaillard, trim, and wantonly great, "after the French fubb and garb," than stands with the national gravity of the noble English.' The King, we are also told, 'is a most sweet and gentle Prince, saving as he is misled by that great man.' 'Who governs the land?' it was asked. 'Why, the King. And who governs the King? Why, the Duke of Buckingham. And who governs the Duke? Why, the Devil.'

The conflict that now ensued between the Executive and the Legislature was not, therefore, so much an antagonism between the King and the Parliament as between the Parliament and the favourite Minister.

To supply the want of Parliamentary assistance, Charles now issued Privy Seals for borrowing the necessary money from his subjects. The sum required to be lent, we learn, was 'to be sent to the collector within twelve days, and was to be repaid within eighteen months.' This form of compulsory contribution created the liveliest dissatisfaction from those on whom levies were made; still it excited no open resistance, and the amount thus raised enabled the ill-starred expedition against Cadiz to set out upon its work of destruction. Concerning this expedition, the State Papers are full of interest, but, inasmuch as they throw little new light upon Cecil's undertaking, it is not necessary to dwell upon the matter they contain. We know that the expedition was a complete failure; Puntal was taken and abandoned, a march was made against the enemy outside the walls of Cadiz, but 'the men being faint and without provisions, the Marshal (Sir Edward Cecil, created Viscount Wimbledon in anticipation of the successes he did *not* achieve) gave them wine, under the influence of which they came unmanageable.' It was found that the town could only be taken by siege, 'for which we were unprepared. We, therefore, embarked our men, to our great dishonour.' The Plate fleet, with its splendid treasures on board, eluded the search of Wimbledon, and safely anchored in Cadiz Bay, and thus,

having failed to carry out a single one of the numerous plans it had proposed to execute, the expedition returned home.

When we read a few of the entries from the State Papers as to the conduct of this enterprise, we are not surprised at the result that attended its efforts. Buckingham, though he remained at home, was 'Generalissimo of the Fleet;' whilst Cecil, its actual commander, was an excellent soldier, who had seen much service in the Dutch army, but who naturally had had no experience of naval warfare. The details of the expedition were managed with the usual carelessness and incompetency of Buckingham. 'Great wrong,' writes Sir George Blundell, 'has been done to the King and his service by pretending the ships were fit to go to sea; they were leaky and rotten, and every man cries out for victuals. Some drink beverage of cider that stinks worse than carrion, and have no other drink. They have been much wronged and abased.' 'The landsmen,' writes Wimbledon himself, 'are so ill-exercised, that they killed more of their own men than of the enemy. The sickness is so great that there are not seamen enough to keep the watches. The ships leaky. We feel the want of a competent number of pinnaces, which in Queen Elizabeth's time were always furnished; but now, to save charges, we have ketches, which men are afraid to go in. Our beverage of an ill-quality, and victual growing short. I anticipated all these difficulties and wants before setting out; but, being commanded by the Duke, I resolved to undertake anything.' 'I speak out of anguish,' moans Sir William St. Leger, 'to see so brave and chargeable a business so foully

miscarried. The army is in wretched poor condition for want of health and clothes, and much decayed in numbers.'

The expedition had sailed from Plymouth early in October, amid the hopes of a proud and high-spirited nation; it returned a few weeks later, ship straggling after ship, their crews decimated by disease, whilst the soldiers, on landing, had barely rags enough to satisfy the demands of decency. 'We request,' write the Commissioners at Plymouth to the Privy Council, 'that the soldiers may be speedily clothed, the greatest part not having therewith to cover their nakedness, which is the greatest cause of their miseries. Orders should also be given for the maintenance of the captains and officers, whose complaints are equal to those of the soldiers.' The men thus returned were distributed throughout the different counties, and, in defiance of all law, billeted upon the people.

The expedition to Cadiz a failure, his supplies squandered, his necessities daily becoming more urgent, the King had no alternative but to call a new Parliament. The House of Commons was, however, in no more generous or pliant mood than its predecessor. It bitterly complained of the reverses of the past, of the secrecy in which all the accounts relating to the expenditure were enveloped, of the manner in which the Constitution had been strained, and of the incompetency of the sole Minister of the Crown. After much debate, it was resolved that three subsidies and three-fifteenths should be granted to the King; but that the vote should not be converted into a Bill until all grievances had been redressed. The Commons demanded that the favourite

should be removed ; that a statement as to the expenditure of the future should be presented them ; that the religious question should be definitely settled ; and that the claim of Parliament to control the Crown, as well as to advise it, should be recognised. Buckingham was impeached, but Parliament was dissolved before the charges brought against him had been fully inquired into.

Charles, who regarded himself as the centre and force of all Government, declined to be responsible for his actions to his Parliament, to permit an inquiry into the expenditure of the past, or to throw over his mischievous adviser. In a fit of temper he dissolved the Houses ; and, since his faithful Commons would grant no subsidies without being taken into the Royal confidence, he determined to carry out those '*new counsels*' he had threatened his Parliament with adopting. He compounded with the Catholics for the suspension of the penal laws against them. He demanded a loan of 100,000*l.* from the City of London. He required each of the maritime towns, with the aid of the adjacent counties, to equip so many vessels as were appointed them. He begged pecuniary assistance from the peers and from all friends to his cause. These expedients, however, did not meet with the success he had anticipated ; and, after some deliberation, an Act of Council was passed which enforced a general loan from the subject according as every one was assessed in the rolls of the last subsidy. Against this taxation, and the inquisitorial manner in which it was conducted, a violent outcry was raised. Many declined to contribute to the loan, and the

State Papers. of the years 1626-1627 are full of the remonstrances and sufferings of those who opposed the Court. All who refused to comply with the King's demands were thrust into prison.

And now, as if domestic matters were not grave enough, the country was plunged into a new war. To avenge himself against Richelieu, who, jealous of the favour accorded to Buckingham, then Ambassador Extraordinary at Paris, by the beautiful Anne of Austria, had interrupted the amorous designs of the gallant Envoy, the Duke threw down the gauntlet to France. He gave orders that all the French servants of Henrietta Maria should be dismissed. He encouraged the English men-of-war to seize upon French merchantmen. He made overtures to Spain for peace. These injuries produced only remonstrances across the Channel, or at the most reprisals, and failed to excite that declaration of hostilities which the Duke had anticipated. Since France kept her temper, and declined to be provoked, Buckingham now resolved to show his hand, so that no mistake should arise as to his intentions. Nothing daunted by the fate of the Cadiz expedition, he fitted out a fleet of 100 sail; he embarked an army of 7,000 men; he appointed himself commander of this naval and military force, and bent his course to the West of France. Rochelle, garrisoned by the Huguenots, was then besieged by Richelieu; and it had been the intention of Buckingham to relieve the town, and make common cause with the beleaguered against the foe. The Rochellois, however, distrustful of the scheme

of the English commander, refused to admit the Duke ; and the baffled commander, concealing his mortification as best he could, steered farther west, intent upon subduing the Isle of Rhé.

Of the various historical incidents relating to this period recorded in the State Papers there is none more minutely treated than this, the second ill-fated enterprise of Buckingham. The whole facts relating to the expedition to Rhé are brought so vividly before us that there is not the slightest break in the continuity of the narrative, or a single omission which the historian can regret. We read all the details as to the preparations that were made ; as to the departure and landing of the troops ; as to the endeavours at home to support the expedition with new levies and continued supplies ; as to the feverish anxiety in which England and France were kept for several months by the progress of the siege of the citadel of St. Martin ; as to the final abandonment of the siege and the return to England of the shattered forces. The expedition under Buckingham is but a repetition of the expedition under Wimbledon. The ships were deficient in accommodation and in sanitary arrangements, and utterly unseaworthy. The commissariat department was miserably attended to. 'There was no bread and beer thought of for the soldiers,' writes one ; 'wheat instead of bread, but no means to grind or bake it, and wine instead of beer.' 'The present condition of Buckingham's army,' says a second, 'is such, that, without a speedy supply, they will not only be disabled from gaining anything, but will hazard the loss of

what they have got.' 'The army,' mourns a third, 'grows daily weaker, victuals waste, purses are empty, ammunition consumes, winter grows, their enemies increase in numbers and power, and they hear nothing from England.' The men wanted hose, shoes, and clothing; their ammunition was scarce; their pay was in arrears, and disease was doing more harm in their ranks than the attacks of the enemy.

Nor is the story of the siege of St. Martin, the chief town of the Isle of Rhé, one that Englishmen will care to remember. The men, ill and discouraged, were not anxious to fight; there was no order or discipline maintained amongst them; they refused to obey their commander, and we read of Buckingham, cudgel in hand, going about 'beating some and threatening others,' in order to rouse them to their work; the officers had little confidence in their chief, and being deprived of the materials calculated to render a siege successful, they conducted their duties in a feeble, half-hearted manner, which could not but act disastrously upon the men under their command. The only cheering incident in the history of the expedition is the courage that its General displayed. From all quarters the bravery of Buckingham was acknowledged. 'The Lord-General,' writes Sir Allen Apsley, 'is the most industrious and in all business one of the first, in person, in danger. Last night the enemy's ordnance played upon his lodging, and one shot lighted upon his bed, but did him no harm.' 'Our General,' writes Henry de Vic, 'behaves himself to admiration, making those parts appear which lay hid before. His care

is infinite, his courage undaunted, his patience and continual labours beyond what could have been expected. Himself views the grounds, goes to the trenches, visits the batteries, observes where the shot doth light and what effect it works. He is partly constrained to exertion by the carelessness of some officers. None of extraordinary credit in the army besides himself.' 'He has shown,' cries the Abbé Scaglia, 'that he possesses the courage of Scipio.'

Whilst superintending the operations before the town of St. Martin, the Duke received certain letters which have been preserved amongst the State Papers, and which in their strictest sense may be classed in the *domestic* Series. On his departure from England the Duke had quitted his wife without taking any formal leave, though promising that he would see her again shortly. He had even assured her that he would not accompany the expedition. The Duchess was then in a condition of health which rendered the absence of her Lord particularly distressing, and she thus upbraids him: 'I confess I did ever fear you would be caught,' she writes,¹ 'for there was no other likelihood after all that show, but you must needs go. For my part I have been a very miserable woman hitherto, that never could have you keep at home. But now I will ever look to be so, until some blessed occasion comes to draw you quite from the Court. For there is none more miserable than I am now, and till you leave this life of a courtier, which you have ever been since I knew you, I shall ever

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, June 26[?], 1627.

think myself unhappy. I am the unfortunatest of all other, that ever when I am with child I must have so much cause of sorrow, as to have you go from me, but I never had so great a cause of grief as now I have. God of his mercy give me patience, and if I were sure my soul would be well I could wish myself to be out of this miserable world, for till then I shall not be happy. Now I will no more write to hope you do not go, but must betake myself to my prayers for your safe and prosperous journey, which I will not fail to do and for your quick return, but never whilst I live will I trust you again, nor never will put you to your oath for anything again. . . . I pray God never woman may love a man as I have done you, that none may feel that which I have done for you. Since there is no remedy but that you must go, I pray God send you gone quickly, that you may be quickly at home again; and whosoever that wished you to this journey beside yourself that they may be punished, for it will be cause of a great deal of grief to me. But that is no matter. Now there is no remedy but patience, which God send me! I pray God send me wise, and not to hurt myself with grieving. Now I am very well, I thank God, and so is Mall. And so I bid you farewell.

‘Your poor grieved and obedient wife,

‘K. BUCKINGHAM.

‘I pray give order before you go for the jewels which I owe for. Burn this for God’s sake. Go not to land and pity me, for I feel [most miserable] at this time. Be not

angry with me for writing these, for my heart is so full I cannot choose because I did not look for it. I would to Jesus that there was any way in the world to fetch you off this journey with your honour. If any pains or any suffering of mine could do it, I were a most happy woman; but you have send (*sic*) yourself, and made me miserable. God forgive you for it.'

Hearing of the indifference of the Duke to danger and of his freedom in exposing himself to the enemy, the fond wife entreats Dr. Moore, Buckingham's physician, to watch over her fickle lord, and to do his best to prevent him from landing at Rochelle. 'I should think myself,' she writes,¹ 'the most miserablest woman in the world if my lord should go into the main land, for though God has blessed him hitherto beyond all imagination in this action, yet I hope he will not still run on in that hope to venture himself beyond all discretion, and I hope this journey has not made him a Puritan, to believe in predestination. I pray keep him from being too venturous, for it does not belong to a General to walk trenches; therefore have a care of him. I will assure you by this action he is not any whit the more popular man than when he went; therefore you may see whether these people be worthy for him to venture his life for.'

On the return of the expedition her eagerness to welcome her lord thus breaks out:² 'Since I heard the news of your landing, I have been still every hour looking for you, that I

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, October 20 [?], 1627.

² *Ibid.* November 15 [?], 1627.

cannot now, till I see you, sleep in the nights, for every minute, if I do hear any noise, I think it is one from you, to tell me the happy news what day I shall see you, for I confess I long for it with much impatience.'

Among the papers of this interesting period we also light upon a letter to the Duke from his mother Mary, Countess of Buckingham, written at the time when the troops were before the walls of St. Martin. It is in reply to one penned by her son begging for money, and saying that he is so busy that he has no time to spend in prayer :¹—

'My dearly beloved Son,—I am very sorry you have entered into so great business, and so little care to supply your wants, as you see by the haste that is made to you. I hope your eyes will be opened to see what a great gulf of business you have put yourself into, and so little regarded at home, where all is merry and well pleased, though the ships be not victualled as yet, nor mariners to go with them. As for monies the kingdom will not supply your expenses, and every man groans under the burthen of the times. At your departure from me you told me you went to make peace, but it was not from your heart. This is not the way ; for you to imbroid the whole Christian world in wars, and then to declare it for religion, and make God a party to these woful affairs, so far from God as light and darkness, and the highway to make all Christian princes to bend their forces against us, that otherwise in policy would have taken our parts.

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, August 30 [?], 1627.

You know the worthy King your master never liked that way, and as far as I can perceive there is none that cries not out of it. You that acknowledge the infinite mercy and providence of Almighty God, in preserving your life amongst so many that fell down dead on every side of you, and spares you for more honour to Himself, if you would not be wilfully blind, and overthrow yourself body and soul ; for He hath not, I hope, made you so great and given you so many excellent parts as to suffer you to die in a ditch.

‘ Let me, that is your mother, intreat you to spend some of your hours in prayers and meditating what is fitting and pleasing in His sight that has done so much for you ; and that honour you so much strive for, bend it for His honour and glory, and you will soon find a change so great that you would not for all the kingdoms in this world forego, if you might have them at your disposing. And do not think it out of fear and timorousness of a woman I persuade you to this. No, no ! It is that I scorn. I would have you leave this bloody way in which you are crept into, I am sure contrary to your nature and disposition. God hath blessed you with a virtuous wife and sweet daughter, with another son, I hope, if you do not destroy it by this way you take ; she cannot believe a word you speak, you have so much deceived her. She hath bestord [bestirred ?] herself carefully for you, in sending monies with the supply that is now coming though slowly ; it would have been worse but for her.

‘ But now let me come to myself. If I had a world you

should command it, and whatsoever I have, or shall have, it is all yours by right ; but, alas ! I have laid out that money I had, and more by a thousand pounds by your consent in buying of Gouldsmise [*sic*] Grange, which I am very sorry for now. I never dreamed you should have needed any of my help, for if I had they should have wanted all and myself before you. I hope this servant will bring us better news of your resolutions than yet we hear of, which I pray heartily for, and give alms for you, that it will please Almighty God to direct your heart the best way to His honour and glory.

‘ I am ever your most loving, affectionate, sad mother,

‘ M. BUCKINGHAM.’

Though the leader and originator of the expedition against Rhé had failed in carrying out a single detail of the campaign he had set before him, he did not lack the applause of the servile and the interested. Had Buckingham been the most successful general or the most far-seeing statesman, he could not have listened to more fulsome flattery. He was a *Cæsar*, an *Alexander*, the most brilliant of commanders ; what he had achieved at Rhé was even, in the opinion of the Earl of Exeter, ‘miraculous.’ The Duke had hesitated to accept a gift from the Bishop of London, whereupon his Lordship assures Buckingham that to refuse his offering would break his heart. ‘When God,’ he writes to the Duke, ‘returns back again a man’s sacrifice, it is because He is offended with him ; therefore I cannot live if your Grace returns me mine.’ Field had been raised to the see of

St. David's on the recommendation of Buckingham. Accordingly he writes to Laud to tell his patron that the Duke had imitated God Himself, who 'very oft as He passes by and seems to turn from us leaves His blessing behind.' This recently created bishop is the most effusive of toadies. He compares the late parliamentary opposition to 'dogs in a village, barking for company with full and foul mouth,' and 'burns with desire to turn soldier, and encourage the soldiers to cry St. George, to pray and fight for the Duke.' Men of ancient race, soldiers of proved courage, statesmen who had seen much service, clergymen who professed that their kingdom was not of this world, mindful of the power and patronage of the great favourite, did not blush to grovel in the dust before the Duke, and, in the hope of advancement, to sign themselves his 'creatures' and his 'slaves.' A few—a very few—dared boldly to protest against the policy of Buckingham, and the measures he had suggested to raise supplies.

Success had not crowned the efforts of the expedition against Rhé; the besieged had been relieved, the assistance expected by the English General had not arrived, and Buckingham felt that he had no alternative but to embark his troops and return to England. The loss of life that this expedition entailed has been variously estimated. The following entry among the State Papers settles the question:—'Statement of the number of the several regiments embarked at Portsmouth for the expedition to the Isle of Rhé, with the numbers of subsequent supplies, and the numbers

which returned to England. Embarked, 5,934 ; subsequent supplies, 1,899 ; returned, 2,989.¹

In the meantime the unconstitutional proceedings instituted by Charles, though they inflamed the country with wrath and sedition, failed to replenish the coffers of his exhausted exchequer. The general loan had been well subscribed to, but all its proceeds were swallowed up by the pressing necessities of the Crown. In the expenditure of the past year there was a vast deficit. The preparations for war now amounted to a fearful total. The pay of the soldiers and the seamen was rated at some 200,000*l.* a year, and if Rochelle was to be relieved in the spring, another 100,000*l.* would be required. How, and from whom, were these sums to be obtained? The King was aware that the inevitable must be boldly faced, and he summoned his memorable third Parliament. We all remember the scenes that took place. The Commons, conscious of their power and of the justness of the grievances they complained of, refused to be brow-beaten, or to yield one jot of their demands. Five subsidies were voted, but before they were handed to the King, the representatives of the people determined to obtain a guarantee against the abuses of the past. The Petition of Right was drawn up. Charles was asked to pledge himself that he would never raise loans or levy taxes without the consent of Parliament ; that his subjects should be free from arbitrary imprisonments ; that soldiers should not be billeted upon the people ; and that martial law should be abolished. The

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, November 1627.

King attempted to evade the clauses of the Petition. Instead of pronouncing the usual words which signify the royal assent to a bill, he, inspired by Buckingham, replied : 'The King willesh that right be done according to the laws and customs of the realm, and that the statutes be put into execution ; that his subjects may have no cause to complain of any wrong or oppression contrary to their just rights and liberties, to the preservation whereof he holds himself in conscience as much obliged as of his own Prerogative.' The Commons were not to be hoodwinked by so elastic an answer ; they did not want the statutes confirmed by simple words, but interpreted according to the hard and fast limits they had assigned to them. For a time the King refused to return any other answer, and threatened the House with instant dissolution. Then, after some delay, advised by Buckingham, who had been concerned at the fierce censure poured upon his conduct by the Commons, and pressed by a joint application from the two Chambers, Charles came down to Westminster and agreed to the terms of the Petition, by pronouncing the usual form, 'Let it be law as is desired.'

'The King came to the House at two o'clock,' writes Secretary Conway, 'and gave an answer which begat such an acclamation as made the House ring several times. I never saw a more general joy in all faces than spread itself suddenly and broke out into ringing of bells and bonfires miraculously.' 'It is not possible,' writes Sir Francis Nethersole to the Queen of Bohemia, 'to express with what joy this answer was heard, nor what joy it causes in all the city, where they

are making bonfires at every door, such as were never seen but upon his Majesty's return from Spain.' This frantic delight was, however, soon checked. In the struggle between the inquisitorial power of Parliament and the despotism of Prerogative the Commons had been victorious. Flushed with success they now pressed the Crown still further with their demands. They requested that the penal laws against the Catholics should be fully enforced, that the Arminians should be silenced, and that the Duke of Buckingham should be removed. To satisfy the religious prejudices of the Commons the King had no objection, but to dismiss the Duke from his Councils was an interference with the Royal Prerogative which Charles declined to entertain for a moment. Irritated at this refusal, the Lower House now proceeded in a spirit of mischievous intrusion to meddle with the grant of tonnage and poundage (the duties on exports and imports), which ever since the days of our sixth Henry had been voted by Parliament during the lifetime of each successive monarch, on the ground that the King had relinquished his claim to this taxation by his assent to the Petition of Right. Charles loudly raised his voice against this strained interpretation of the favours he had recently granted; and seeing that the position of affairs was now reversed, that it was the Commons who were encroaching upon the rights of the Crown, and not the Sovereign upon the rights of the subject, he hastily prorogued the Parliament.

And now he who had been the head and front of all the evils under which the country was then labouring was to

fall a victim, not to the vengeance of a justly angered Legislature, but to the hand of an unknown assassin. The Duke of Buckingham had gone down to Portsmouth to superintend the preparations for an expedition to relieve Rochelle. Whilst engaged in conversation with one of his colonels, a man, who had long been on the watch for his opportunity, suddenly pressed against him and stabbed him in the breast. The blow had been well directed; the Duke unsheathed the knife from his wound, crying out, 'Villain!' and attempted to pursue his murderer; but he was mortally struck, and after an unsuccessful effort to steady himself fell to the ground a dead man. The assassin was John Felton, a young Puritan officer who had conceived a deadly hatred against Buckingham on account of having been disappointed of his promotion when serving in the expedition against Rhé. 'Our noble Duke,' writes Lord Dorchester,¹ 'in the greatest joy and alacrity I ever saw him in my life, at news received about eight o'clock in the morning of Saturday last, of the relief of Rochelle, wherewith he was hastening to the King, who had that morning sent for him by me, at his going out of a lower parlour, in presence of many standers-by, was stabbed into the breast with a knife by one Felton, a reformed lieutenant, who hastening out of the door, and the Duke having pulled out the knife and following him out of the parlour into the hall, with his hand put to his sword, there fell down dead with much effusion of blood. The Lady Anglesea, then looking down into the hall, went

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, August 27, 1628.

immediately with a cry into the Duchess's chamber, who was in bed, and there fell down on the floor. The murderer in the midst of the noise and tumult slipped out into the kitchen, when a voice being current in the court, "A Frenchman! a Frenchman!" his guilty conscience making him believe it was "Felton! Felton!" he came out of the kitchen, said, "I am the man," and rendered himself to the company.'

So terrible a tragedy, its victim the foremost man in the kingdom, created a profound sensation, and not a detail respecting the history of the murderer, the sorrow of the King, the grief of the widow, the burial of the Duke, and the sentiments of the nation upon the dread event is omitted in the State Papers before us. There we learn how Felton had come 'from London expressly the Wednesday, arriving at Portsmouth the very morning, not above half an hour before he committed the deed;' how 'he gloried in his act the first day, but when told that he was the first assassin of an Englishman, a gentleman, a soldier, and a Protestant, he shrank at it, and is now grown penitent;' how it was wished to have him racked, should the law sanction such punishment, to find out his accomplices; how 'he confessed his offence to "be a fearful and crying sin," and requested that he might do some public penance before his death in sackcloth, with ashes on his head and ropes about his neck;' how verses were written in his honour, and how he was hanged at Tyburn and the body then carried to Portsmouth to be suspended in chains.¹ There

¹ 'A portion of the gibbet upon which the Duke of Buckingham's murderer (Felton) was suspended in chains has been brought to light by

we read how 'the King took the Duke's death very heavily, keeping his chamber all that day, as is well to be believed ; but the base multitude in London drink health to Felton, and there are infinitely more cheerful than sad faces of bitter degree ;' how 'there never was greater demonstration of affection than his Majesty showed to the deceased Duke in all which concerns his honour, estate, friends, and enemies, whom he cannot well look upon if any come in his way ;' how 'the King omitted nothing which may in any way concern the doing honour to the body of the Duke,' and how the corpse was privately interred in the Abbey to escape the fury of the mob ; and how passionate was the sorrow of the bereaved Duchess. Still to the nation at large, though it regretted the act of the assassin, few beyond the King and the widow mourned the death of the Duke. 'The stone of offence being now removed by the hand of God,' writes a courtier, 'it is to be hoped that the King and his people will come to a perfect unity.' The following epitaph, suggested by the rise and fall of Buckingham, is among the State Papers :¹—

Ænigma mundi morior.

Omnia fui nec quicquam habui ;
 Patriæ parens et Hostis audio ;
 Deliciæ idem et ludibrium Parliamenti ;
 Qui dum Papistis bellum infero, insimulor Papista ;
 Dum Protestantium partibus consulo, occidior a Protestante.

the workmen engaged in erecting the new refreshment and retiring rooms upon Southsea Pier. The gibbet bears the borough arms and date, the latter having been placed on it when it was decided it should be used as a borough boundary.'—*Morning Paper*, May 5, 1880.

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, September 18 [?], 1628.

The vacancy left in the councils of the King by the murder of Buckingham was soon to be filled up by a far more dangerous favourite. Few characters of this period have been more misjudged and less understood than the designer of the famous policy of Thorough. It has been the fashion for historians and biographers to represent Wentworth as the most flagrant of political apostates. In his early life, it is said, he stood forth as the champion of the liberties of the people of England, as the most formidable of the antagonists of the Crown, as the representative of the power of Parliament in contradistinction to the claims of Prerogative. Then, when his name had been known throughout the country as the friend of freedom and as the staunch ally of those who had made war against the arbitrary proceedings of the Sovereign, he shamelessly deserted his party and enrolled himself in the ranks of those who were the warmest supporters of a dangerous despotism. This conventional view of the character of Wentworth becomes at once disproved when we study his life and acts by the light of the evidence brought forward by the State Papers and by the valuable Strafford correspondence. We see him imperious, stern, sweeping in the measures he advocates, untiring in his industry, mischievous, uncompromising, but inconsistent never. He was not an apostate, but a disciple whose faith had been hidden for a time behind the clouds of personal hatred. In the first three Parliaments summoned by Charles he had sided with the country party, not because he was opposed to the policy of the Crown, but because he detested with a malig-

nity which knew no rest the man who was then the adviser of the King and the sole minister of the nation. He is the first on the list of those English statesmen who have gone into factious opposition not because they disapprove of the measures of the Government, but because they hate the Minister who suggests them.

What was the origin of the feud between Buckingham and Wentworth we know not, but at one time, from the Papers before us, it is evident that no such antipathy existed. Early in the year 1626 we find Wentworth writing to Conway respecting the Presidentship of York, which Lord Scrope was on the eve of resigning, and suggesting the appointment of himself as Scrope's successor. In that letter he states that he will not move further in his suit until he knows how it may please the Duke of Buckingham, *'from whose bounty I acknowledge much already, and still repose under the shadow of his favour.'* Whether the Duke declined to further the applications of Wentworth for personal advancement, whether he was jealous of him as a probable rival near the King, whether he feared his intellectual superiority, or whatever may have been the cause of the quarrel, it is certain that Buckingham essayed his utmost to crush the ambitious Yorkshire knight. Through underhand influence he endeavoured to deprive him of the office of *custos rotulorum* which he held; he attempted to disqualify him from serving in the second Parliament by causing the name of Wentworth to be pricked as sheriff of his county; and on every occasion he tried to prejudice the

King against him. To a man of Wentworth's imperious will and keen ambition, this hostility of Buckingham, which effectually barred all the approaches to Court favour, was intensely galling. He resolved to be avenged, and there were few in the House of Commons who could compare with him for fierce denunciations against the policy of the Crown, or for bitter invectives against the Minister.

Yet, after a careful perusal of his speeches and letters, it is absurd to class Wentworth in the same category with the leaders of the popular party—with Eliot, with Pym, with Hampden. He was no friend to democracy; he had no wish to see the Prerogative domineered over by the Parliament; if there was to be battle between the Sovereign and the subject, he did not desire to see the latter supreme. In his sympathies, in his prejudices, in his views of government, he was thoroughly the aristocrat. When he stood forward as the opponent of the Crown he was always most careful to distinguish between the acts of the Sovereign and the acts of the Minister. It was not the King who was ever at fault, but his dangerous and short-sighted adviser. The whole blame of misgovernment, the illegal measures that had been introduced, the grievances under which the country was then labouring, were the work of Buckingham, and of Buckingham alone. 'This hath not been done,' cried Wentworth, after passionately inveighing against the loans that had been levied, the imprisonments that had been put in force, and the soldiers that had been billeted upon the people—'this hath not been done by the King (under the

pleasing shade of whose crown I hope we shall ever gather the fruits of justice), but by projectors : these have extended the prerogative of the King beyond its just limits, so as to mar the sweet harmony of the whole.' So little did he consider himself as the enemy of the Sovereign, 'under whose smile he would much rather live than the frown,' that he begged Weston to use his good offices with Charles to remove the Royal prejudice against him, and owned himself to be an 'honest, well-affected, loyal subject.'

After the passing of the Petition of Right, Wentworth severed himself entirely from his colleagues. He had no sympathy with the course the House of Commons was then pursuing. All the grievances complained of had been redressed, and it appeared to him that it was now the Lower House who were trying to tyrannise over the Sovereign, and who were imitating some of the worst precedents that Charles had set. 'The authority of a King,' he said, 'is the keystone which closeth up the arch of order and government, which contains each part in due relation to the whole, and which once shaken and infirmed, all the frame falls together into a confused heap of foundation and battlement, of strength and beauty.' The position of affairs was now reversed. It was the House of Commons which was on the side of despotism and unjust encroachments, whilst the King had assumed the true position of a wise and benevolent Sovereign. Wentworth made overtures to the Court which were accepted; the death of Buckingham removed the great bar to his progress, and henceforth the

chief author of the Petition of Right was to be the firm friend and confidential adviser of the King.

We now enter upon those memorable eleven years when for the first time in our history the personal will of the Sovereign and his advisers was to supplant the direction of Parliament; when justice herself was to be domineered over by the decisions of arbitrary and illegal courts; and when the people, harassed by inquiries and burdened by taxation, were to find themselves rudely deprived of the constitutional protection their forefathers had enjoyed. Irritated at the tone adopted by the Commons respecting the right of levying the duties on tonnage and poundage, and at the attacks directed against the Papists and the Arminians, 'whereby the King and his regal authority and commandment have been so highly contemned as our kingly office cannot bear nor any former age parallel,' Charles hastily dissolved Parliament, condemning by fine and imprisonment those who had taken a foremost part in the late opposition. Peace was made with France and Spain, and the whole attention of the Sovereign was now confined to the domestic concerns of his kingdom. The events embraced by the State Papers during this period divide themselves naturally into three heads: the ecclesiastical policy of Laud, the fiscal policy of Charles, and the despotic policy of Strafford.

The character of Laud will always be open to a diversity of opinions, and estimated variously according to the sympathies of the critic. To the political layman he represents the worst type of the meddling ecclesiastic, always interfering in

matters foreign to his province, and careless of all consequences provided the pride of his order be upheld. To the Protestant he is the type of that sacerdotal arrogance which seeks to create a marked distinction between the clergy and the laity, and to control the affairs of men and nations by calling into play the terrorism of the unseen and the exercise of a special and peculiar authority. To the High Churchman he is the type of a true son of the Church, anxious to maintain a proper discipline within her fold, firm in his resolve to repress the mischief of dissent and the vagaries of latitudinarianism, and conscious of his right to wield that power which belongs, and only belongs, to the consecrated priest of the Most High. Viewed apart from sectarian prejudices and partialities, Laud was a man of great industry, of much business-like capacity, of little knowledge of human nature, and consequently deficient in tact, zealous, hasty, unsympathetic, and severe. His worst enemy could not, however, deny that his life was pure and his honour stainless. 'My lord of Canterbury,' writes Sir Thomas Roe to the Queen of Bohemia,¹ 'is an excellent man, and if your Majesty has no relation to him, I wish you would be pleased to make it, for he is very just, incorrupt, and, above all, mistaken by the erring world. For my part I do esteem him a rare counsellor for integrity, and a fast friend, and one that hath more interest in his Majesty's judgment than any man.' Laud had completely ingratiated himself in the affections of his master, and his opinion

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, December 10, 1634.

carried such weight with the Royal mind that, in the judgment of Roe, he was the 'one man' whom those who wished favours from the Court should conciliate. At the time of the dissolution of the third Parliament he was Bishop of London, but further honour was in store for him. On the death of Abbot he was raised to the See of Canterbury, and on the death of Lord Treasurer Weston he was appointed First Lord of the Treasury.

In the volumes before us there is little connected with the history of Laud which is not the subject of the fullest and most minute comment. We listen to his frequent counsels to his Sovereign; we hear his congratulations upon the abolition of Parliaments, and his delight 'that noise is silenced for ever;' we read his letters to Strafford; we watch him making his narrow inquiries at the Treasury into the national expenditure, passing his stern judgment upon some unhappy offender brought before the Star Chamber or the High Commission Court, punishing vagrants, restoring churches and cathedrals, and persecuting Low Churchmen because they fail to carry out the rubric of the Prayer Book to the very letter. There in these Papers stands his picture painted both by friend and foe—we see him the fussy politician, the stern judge, the uncompromising Churchman, the staunch friend to his order, the hard, intolerant man. The portrait may be flattered or distorted, but not a single feature is permitted to escape without minute criticism. Whatever opinion may be held as to the ability of Laud, it is impossible after perusing the evidence preserved in the State

Papers to doubt his industry. His energy, to copy Lord Exeter's phrase, is 'miraculous.' Nothing sacred or secular, civil or criminal, was beyond his province. He would come fresh from the composition of a State Paper to discuss with the authorities at Oxford the best means for the suppression of dissipation among the undergraduates. At one moment he would be sitting in solemn state as presiding judge in the Star Chamber or High Commission Court, and the next he would be as keen as a hound on the slot of a deer in pursuit of disobedient Nonconformists. 'We took another conventicle of Separatists,' he writes to his private secretary with all the glee of a successful sportsman, 'in Newington Woods, on Sunday last, in the very brake where the King's stag should have been lodged for his hunting the next morning.' Now he would occupy himself with putting down wakes, issuing writs for ship-money, or interesting himself in the embellishment of his favourite Oxford; and then he would be busy interfering with the churches of the English residents in Holland, or with the churches of the Protestant refugees in England, or with the form of worship north of the Tweed. One month we find his attention entirely engrossed with the care of cathedrals, the patronage of a learned literature, and the proper exercise by his brother bishops of their ordination duties; the next he is engaged in regulating the Sunday recreation of the people, superintending the ecclesiastical matters of the Inns of Court, and solving the difficult problem of the double duty to King and Pope of the Roman Catholic subjects of a Protestant country.

'Nothing,' writes Mr. Bruce, 'was too lofty, too distant, or too mean to escape his regulating hand.'

The chief feature, however, in the policy of Laud is his conduct as a Church reformer. As the most rigid of ceremonialists he was exceedingly pained at the lax discipline maintained by the clergy, and the evasions of the rubric of the Book of Common Prayer, to be met with in the churches scattered throughout the country. He was determined to put down, by the severe ruling of the Star Chamber and High Commission Court, the Puritanical element which was then leavening the doctrines of the Church of England with its Calvinism, till they were hardly deserving of the name of 'Catholic.' He bade all bow at the name of Jesus. He gave orders for the removal of the altar from the centre of the aisle to the east end of the church. He visited with punishment the clergyman who refused to call himself 'priest,' to wear the surplice, to teach the doctrine of the Real Presence, to uphold the Apostolic Succession, to maintain the efficacy of Confession, or to use the sign of the Cross. Equally severe was he upon the conduct of the congregation of the clergy. He exacted the most outward reverence from the laity during the hours of Divine worship; they were to bow at the Sacred Name, to turn to the east during the recital of the creeds, not to laugh or talk, or to wear their hats at morning prayer, or to receive the sacrament non-kneeling. How the Archbishop carried these views of his into effect is well known from memorable prosecutions he instituted against offenders, and which are the common


facts of history. Into these—the sentences passed upon Peter Smart, Alexander Leighton, Henry Sherfield, William Prynne, and others—we need not enter, as the evidence before us is not of so novel a nature as to justify special comment.

Among the State Papers there is, however, a document which certainly deserves attention. In the year 1635 Sir Nathaniel Brent, the Vicar-General, reported to Laud the result of his visitation throughout the dioceses of Norwich, Peterborough, Lichfield, Worcester, Gloucester, Winchester, and Chichester. From the pages of this report we have an insight into the condition of the country, the state of the clergy, the grievances complained of, and the punishments inflicted, all of which are of the deepest interest. At Norwich we read that ‘the cathedral church is much out of order, the hangings of the choir are naught, the pavement not good, the spire of the steeple is quite down, the copes are fair but want mending;’ that ‘many ministers appeared without priests’ cloaks, and some of them are suspected of nonconformity, but they carried themselves so warily that nothing could be proved against them;’ and that the mayor and his brethren were ‘convented’ for ‘walking indecently in the cathedral church every Sunday in prayer time before the sermon.’ At Lynn we learn that the three churches are exceeding fair and well kept, but that ‘there are divers Papists who speak scandalously of the Scriptures and of our religion; they are already presented for it, and I have given order that they shall be brought into the High Commission Court.’ At Bungay ‘Mr. Fairfax, curate

of Rumborough, was charged with divers points of in-conformity, but hath renounced all upon his oath, and hath faithfully promised to read the King's declaration for lawful sports.' Mr. Daines, lecturer of Beccles, 'a man of more than seventy years of age, did never wear the surplice nor use the cross in baptism.' At Ipswich 'I suspended one Mr. Cave, a precise minister of St. Helen's, for giving the sacrament of the Eucharist to non-kneelants.' At St. Edmund's Bury, which was 'formerly infected with Puritanism, but now is well reformed,' the licence of a young curate was taken away 'in regard of his great ignorance, being not able to tell me what Ecclesia did signify.' At Stamford 'the ministers were generally in priests' cloaks, and they, with the laity, were all the time of Divine service uncovered, and still bowed at the pronouncing of the blessed name of Jesus.' At Oundle a canonical admonition was given to the schoolmaster 'for instructing his scholars out of a wrong Catechism, and for expounding the Ten Commandments out of the writings of a silenced minister.' At Northampton the parish priest and his congregation were threatened with the terrors of the High Commission Court if the laity continued to wear their hats during Divine service and refused to bow at the name of Jesus. At Wolverhampton a young curate was suspended for declining to call himself curate but assistant. At Bridgenorth the vicar was suspended for marrying one couple before the canonical hour. In the town of Derby several of the clergy were suspended for drunkenness, and for 'making many very

foul clandestine marriages to the great offence of the country.' At Worcester the state of the cathedral and of the much walking about during the hours of Divine service are complained of. At Stratford-upon-Avon the vicar was suspended 'for grossly particularising in his sermons, for suffering his poultry to roost and his hogs to lodge in the chancel, for walking in the church to con his sermon in time of Divine service,' &c. At Gloucester it is complained that 'they are much given to straggle from their own parishes to hear strangers.' Throughout the pages of this important report, we see how zealous the Archbishop was not only that irreverence and disorderly proceedings should be discountenanced, but that the churches and cathedrals should by repairs and restoration be made worthy of the sacred purpose for which they were intended.

Side by side with this investigation of Brent we have, as a most valuable supplement to the information drawn up by the Vicar-General, four original Minute Books of the proceedings of the High Court of Commission. The first volume runs from 1634 to 1635 ; the second from 1635 to 1636 ; the third from 1639 to 1640 ; and the fourth, which contains fair transcripts of entries in the preceding book, runs from April to June, 1640. Of this court Laud was the chief judge and moving spirit, and from the punishments inflicted by it, we see what were the grievances complained of, and the light in which they were regarded. Turning over the pages of these Minute Books we read how certain vestrymen were fined 10*l*. for their misconduct in publishing a new table of church fees ;



how the King's printers were fined 300*l.* 'for errors in printing the Bible;' how one Nathaniel Barnard was fined 1,000*l.* for seditious preaching at St. Mary's College, Cambridge; how the Lady Eleanor Touchet was fined 3,000*l.* for 'publishing fanatical pamphlets;' how Amy Green was fined 2,000*l.*, 'subject to consideration, for notorious adultery;' how John Laverock, clerk, was imprisoned in Bridewell for 'preaching in London without licence, and living a vicious life;' how Henry Deane, of Greenwich, fisherman, was committed to Newgate for 'receiving men and young women to be transported beyond seas without leave.' And then we read the punishments and penances that were inflicted upon men guilty of flagrant immorality; of contempt of court and refusal to pay wages to their curates; of preaching after deposition and degradation; of building houses upon consecrated land; of cock-fighting taking place in front of the communion table before an admiring audience of villagers; of hindering the officers of the court in the performance of their duty; of circulating Popish tracts and the like; records of offences which afford us no little information as to the state of morality and the social customs of the age. Respecting the proceedings in the Star Chamber, ample information is supplied by the Papers calendared in these volumes. In the hearing of the cases before this court the Archbishop is characteristically conspicuous, and when his judgments are compared with those of the other judges, it will be seen that he is inclined to take a severer view of the offences brought before him than the rest of his colleagues.

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In all his efforts for the restoration of Church discipline, and the rendering the King independent of his Parliament, Laud was ably assisted by the imperious will of Wentworth. The alliance entered into between the King and Wentworth had resulted in the good of the two contracting parties. The King henceforth was to command the devoted services of one of the ablest of his subjects, whilst the servant was to be honoured with titles and splendid advancement. On severing himself from the demagogues of the House of Commons, Wentworth had been raised to the peerage as Baron Wentworth, but shortly after the death of Buckingham he had been created Viscount Wentworth, and appointed Lord President of the North. The post was one especially suited to his pride of power and train of thought. He saw that the contest was no longer between Prerogative and the control of Parliament, but between the abolition of the Royal supremacy and the extinction of Parliament. During the debates before the dissolution of the third Parliament, his loyalty and aristocratic sympathies had been disgusted at the offensive tone adopted by the Lower House, inspired by Eliot and his party, towards the Crown. He admitted the principle that Parliament was to be assembled for counsel and advice, but he declined to recognise the new political creed then put forth, that Parliament should control and domineer over the Crown. Since the House of Commons refused to keep within its proper limits, the King was fully justified in resolving to govern without its advice. It was the province of the King to rule, and not that of the Legislature; and Wentworth henceforth

ranked himself as the stoutest upholder of the absolutism of the Prerogative, in the face of Parliamentary innovations.

He soon displayed the nature of the opinions he held. The jurisdiction of the Council of York, or of the North, extended over the counties of York, Northumberland, Cumberland, and Westmoreland, the bishopric of Durham, the cities of York and Hull, and over the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Originally established to crush the northern rebellions which had broken out on the suppression of the monasteries, its authority had gradually developed, till it now included within itself the powers of the Courts of Common Law, the Courts of Equity, and even of the Star Chamber. This despotic authority had been still further increased in the time of James by rendering the President independent of the forms of law, and subject only to 'secret instructions,' which were transmitted from Whitehall to the Northern Council. Upon his arrival at York, Wentworth proceeded at once to carry out the policy he had designed. Save the King he acknowledged no master, nor tolerated any interference with his actions. As the representative of royalty he exacted the most absolute reverence and respect from all. One young man, the son of Lord Faulconberg, declined to move his hat in the presence of Wentworth; he was imprisoned and forced to apologise. A barrister, who had expressed dissatisfaction with the ruling of the Lord President, was sternly admonished and compelled to expiate his offence by the most servile submission. Sir David Foulis, a man holding a high position in the county,

had opposed the jurisdiction of the Lord President, and had spoken disrespectfully of the Council ; he was summoned to appear before the Star Chamber, and the sentence passed upon him was that he should be degraded from his various offices, be fined 5,000*l.* to the King and 3,000*l.* to Wentworth, and be condemned to offer a most abject apology to the King and ' the Lord Viscount Wentworth, not only in this Court, but in the Court of York, and likewise at the open assizes in the same county ; ' and finally be committed to the Fleet during the Royal pleasure. Hisson, who had participated in the father's offence, was also heavily fined and imprisoned.

From Wentworth's judgments there was no appeal ; lawyers objected to his absolute proceedings, but he overruled their remonstrances with a high hand, and declared that he would lay any man by the heels who ventured to sue out a prohibition in the Courts at Westminster. Knowing how dependent a despotism is upon the military element, Wentworth embodied an effective militia and speedily drilled it into a splendid state of discipline. He enforced the rigid payment of all taxes, fines, and Government exactions, so that the revenue of the Presidency was quadrupled. Never had the North contributed so handsomely to the exchequer ; never had its people been cowed into such a spiritless condition. Bitter remonstrances against the rule of Wentworth had been addressed to the Royal ear ; but Charles, fully satisfied with the devotion of his servant, declined to pay heed to them. The praise of his Sovereign was the only reward that Wentworth desired, and so long as he enjoyed

the confidence of the King, he feared not the abuse of enemies or the malice of intriguers. 'That his Majesty rest satisfied,' he writes to the Earl of Carlisle, in a letter to be found only amongst the State Papers,¹ 'in the course I hold in this Government is my chiefest exaltation before men, and my fullest contentment in my inmost retirements. And surely I will never omit continually to serve him his own way, when I once understand it; and when that beam leaves me, serve him the most profitable way the dimmer lights of my own judgment shall by any means be able to lead me unto. In this truth I will live and die; all the devils of hell, all their ministers on earth, shall never be able to impeach or shake it.'

Such devotion was soon to be repaid with advancement, and Wentworth, after a brief but brilliantly successful reign at York, crossed St. George's Channel as Lord Deputy of Ireland. As at York, so now at Dublin, he carried out those designs which, in their frequent letters to each other, Laud and he had called by the name of Thorough. The policy of Wentworth was that of a vigilant and well-intentioned despotism. Since men were prone to discontent and sedition, they required the strong arm of the military power to suppress their dangerous murmurs; he was therefore in favour of a standing army. The prejudices of the lawyer, the parade of precedents, the adherence to obsolete practices were foreign to his mode of administering the law; in their stead he preferred the exercise of 'sound discretion,' and the ruling of the statesman to that of the judge. He had no


¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, October 24, 1632.

faith in national sympathies, he had no respect for vested interests, he cared not for individual opinion and independence of judgment; but he believed in the welfare that could accrue to a nation from the control and suggestions of one firm, far-seeing, and eminently capable ruler. 'It was a chaste ambition,' he said, when remonstrated with for his absolute proceedings, 'if rightly placed, to have as much power as may be, that there may be power to do the more good for the place where a man serves.' Wentworth was desirous of doing good, but unfortunately for those who had to obey his rule the 'good' was only what appeared in his eyes as wise and beneficial. He knew better than the judges, how the law should be administered; he knew better than the whole bench of bishops how the policy of the Church should be carried out; he knew better than the merchant or the economist how the commerce of a country should be stimulated and restricted. Every question was to pass in review before his keen, fertile mind, and in every question the control and reformation suggested by the policy of Thorough was to be sweepingly exercised.

From his correspondence, both in the Strafford and the State Papers, we see what this policy really signified. Absolute power was placed by the King in the hands of the new Lord Deputy, to do what seemed to him best for the maintenance of the Prerogative and the extension of Irish prosperity. On the arrival of Wentworth in Dublin he was received with royal honours; he established a guard and ordered the ceremonies of the English Court to be observed

within the Castle. To the joy of the nation he gave his sanction to the assembling of a Parliament, but we who are behind the scenes, thanks to the Strafford Papers, see how little reason the Irish had to congratulate themselves upon this permission. The plan of Wentworth was as simple as betrayal and repudiation could make it. He would convene a Parliament ; it would be divided into two sessions ; during the first session the attention of the Houses would be exclusively occupied with the question of supplies ; during the second session the redress of Irish grievances would be brought forward. In his despatches we see Wentworth calmly discussing the base policy he intends to carry out. The first session is the one that interests him. Ample subsidies, he feels sure, will be voted him by a House anxious to propitiate the Crown and smooth the path for the redress of the grievances complained of. Once ample subsidies supplied, the second session can be dispensed with ! He resolves to play off Protestant against Roman Catholic, so as to manage both parties in the House of Commons. He intends to fill the House with his creatures and dependants, so that the requisite majority may be obtained. He has no fear as to the result of his machinations, and is full of confidence at the future.

His hopes were not disappointed. Parliament met, and ample subsidies were voted in the first session by the Irish, expectant of having their grievances redressed. During the second session, Wentworth, with his Exchequer full, laughed to scorn the grievances that were brought before him. The



indignant Catholics now broke out into opposition, but they were defeated by the Lord Deputy throwing all his weight into the scale of the Protestants; the Protestants then, in their turn, claimed their reward, and were cruelly snubbed for their pains. In his correspondence with Laud, Wentworth chuckles over his dishonourable victory, and expresses no shame at the tortuous course he had pursued. He had nothing to do with Catholic or Protestant grievances; all that interested him was to make the Prerogative absolute, to obtain ample supplies, and to render Ireland prosperous according to the form of prosperity he desired. His next step was to reorganise the army. He supplied it with clothes, arms, and ammunition; he paid up all arrears; he restored discipline within its ranks; he strengthened its numbers. and at the end of a short time he had at his disposal a powerful and well-drilled force. To establish a permanent revenue now occupied all his attention. He freed commerce from the pirates that had infested the Irish coasts, he levied fines, he raised taxes, he established monopolies, he planted new districts, he introduced the general cultivation of flax; by his iron will and his determination to make Ireland follow industries, not which she liked best, but which paid her best, he raised the fortunes of the Emerald Isle to a high pitch of prosperity. Within four years the produce of the Customs rose from 12,000*l.* a year to 40,000*l.*, and in the fifth year of his power he wrote home that the annual revenue would exceed the expenditure by 60,000*l.* 'My Lord Deputy of Ireland,' writes Sir Thomas Roe to the

Queen of Bohemia, 'doth great wonders, and governs like a king, and hath taught that kingdom to show us an example of envy by having Parliaments and knowing wisely how to use them. . . . This is of great service, and to give your Majesty a character of the man—he is severe abroad and in business, and sweet in private conversation ; retired in his friendship, but very firm ; a terrible judge, and a strong enemy ; a servant violently zealous in his master's ends, and not negligent of his own ; one that will have what he will, and though of great reason, he can make his will greater when it may serve him ; affecting glory by a seeming contempt ; one that cannot stay long in the middle region of fortune, but *entreprenant*, will either be the greatest man in England or much less than he is.'

The policy which Wentworth was exerting all his energy and industry to carry out in Ireland was being feebly imitated by Charles in England. Assisted by a few confidential advisers the King reigned supreme. The one check upon the arbitrary exercise of Prerogative, the Parliament, had been struck out of the English constitution. The will of the Sovereign was the law of the nation ; by it the judges, removable at the Royal pleasure, framed their decisions ; by it taxes were levied and exactions imposed ; by it ecclesiastical discipline was enforced ; and by it the Privy Council, whose acts of State had now superseded Acts of Parliament, regulated the affairs of the country. Nothing more impresses the student of these exhaustive Calendars than the attention which the King, during the long interval when

Parliament was suppressed, paid to affairs of State. The Privy Council was now the only public deliberative body in matters of Government, and if we are to place any faith in State Paper evidence, Charles was always a constant and most diligent member at its proceedings. Under Buckingham, the King entrusted everything to the favourite; the Duke governed, whilst Charles scarcely ever appeared upon the scene; it was the Duke who advised the Council, who laid down the law, and who conducted the domestic and foreign policy of the country. But since the removal of his trusted adviser, the King had become well versed in the affairs of the Government; he was informed of all that his Ministers had undertaken; he directed the decisions of committees, and was consulted on all important matters of State. The era of Ministerial responsibility had not been ushered in. To men like Laud in England, like Hamilton in Scotland, like Wentworth in Ireland, the duty of obedience to the Royal mandate was the corner-stone of their school of politics. 'Thorough' signified a full and complete devotion to the views and desires of the Sovereign.

Inflexible, narrow-minded, mistaken, yet believing in all sincerity that the course he had mapped out was the right one to pursue, Charles resolved to render himself independent of all control. He had acceded to the demands of Parliament; his generosity in concession had failed to satisfy the Legislature; to grant more would be to menace the might of the Prerogative and to endanger the welfare of the country. He declined to be more submissive to his

Parliaments than his ancestors before him had been submissive; and since the Houses refused to be kept within their constitutional limits he would reign independent of their aid and advice. It was his aim, he asserted, to be actuated in all that he promoted from the purest of motives; the welfare of the country was his one object, and not the gratification of any vindictive feelings; he wished so to govern the country that he might have not only the good opinion of man, but the approval of God. Among the State Papers is a form of daily morning and evening prayer,¹ written in the handwriting of the King, and doubtless the outpourings of his own heart, which is particularly interesting, as reflecting the personal character and opinion of the man. Whatever were the faults of Charles, and in spite of the inconsistencies his career displays, no one can doubt but that he was a sincere believer in Christianity, and anxious in all his actions to be illumined by the light of the Divine wisdom. The spelling has been altered to that of the present day; but it is a curious fact that Charles in writing out this prayer has adopted his own peculiar style of orthography—a spelling founded on the Scottish pronunciation which adhered to him throughout life:—

‘ Good Lord, I thank Thee for keeping me this day [night]. I humbly beseech Thee to keep me this day [night] from all dangers or mischances that may happen to my body, and all evil thoughts which may assault or hurt my soul, for

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, February ? 1632. With regard to this Prayer see *Antiquary* for May 1880.

Jesus Christ His sake. And look upon me Thy unworthy servant, who here prostrates himself at Thy throne of grace ; but look upon me, O Father, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ Thy beloved Son, in whom Thou art only well pleased ; for, of myself, I am not worthy to stand in Thy presence, or to speak with my unclean lips to Thee, most holy and eternal God ; for Thou knowest that in sin I was conceived and born, and that ever since I have lived in iniquity, so that I have broken all Thy holy Commandments, by sinful motions, evil words, and wicked works, omitting many duties I ought to do, and committing many vices which Thou hast forbidden under pain of heavy displeasure ; as for sins, O Lord, they are innumerable ; in the multitude therefore of Thy mercies, and by the merits of Jesus Christ, I entreat Thy Divine Majesty that Thou wouldest not enter into judgment with Thy servant, nor be extreme to mark what is done amiss ; but be Thou merciful to me, and wash away all my sins with the merits of that precious blood that Jesus Christ shed for me ; and not only wash away all my sins, but also purge my heart by Thy Holy Spirit from the dross of my natural corruption ; and as Thou dost add days to my life, so, good Lord, add repentance to my days, that when I have past this mortal life, I may be a partaker of Thy everlasting kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

Deprived of the supplies of his faithful Commons, it was necessary for the King to fill his empty exchequer by a system of direct taxation proceeding from the Crown. He

levied the tonnage and poundage dues, ordering all those who resisted to be imprisoned during the Royal pleasure. He revived the obsolete knighthood fines. He created monopolies, and exacted new licences. He forced Papists to pay for the suspension of the laws against their religion. He laid claim to lands, and to the towns that had sprung up thereupon, on the pretence that they had been filched from the Royal forests. But all these exactions are dwarfed by the issue of his memorable writs for ship-money. Under the Plantagenets it had been the custom to call upon the port towns to furnish ships manned and equipped for the defence of the kingdom. Acting upon the advice of his Attorney-General, Charles determined to levy the tax, and to lay before the country plausible reasons for so doing. The aid was not new, for so late as in 1626 a fleet had been created in this manner, with this difference—that then the country was at war with Spain, whereas now it was in perfect peace. The delicate task of convincing the Council and the nation of the necessity of this imposition was entrusted to Secretary Coke. Nor did the arguments of the Secretary lack a certain weight. He spoke of the increase of English commerce; of the powerful navy of the Dutch Republic; of the fleet being gathered together by France. ‘All nations,’ he said, ‘desire to be served by their valour, yet our ancient reputation is not only cried down, but we submit to wrongs in all places which are not to be endured.’ Then he alluded to the injuries the English had to sustain in Constantinople, ‘where the ambassador’s house had been searched and

merchants had been imprisoned without colour of justice, ships burnt and sailors made slaves ;' in Spain, 'where our ships and goods are confiscated if they find them Holland built ;' in France, 'contrary to the late treaty of peace, endeavours are made to drive our trade out of the country, and at the same time to inveigle our gunfounders and shipwrights into France ;' and to the injuries sustained by our fishings from the intrusion of the Dutch. The only course for the King to pursue to obtain justice was, he said, to reinforce his guards so as to recover his undoubted rights of sovereignty in all his seas.

The reasons of Coke were accepted by the submissive Council, and the writs for ship-money issued. At first the writs were directed to seaport towns only, but the tax was too convenient to remain long thus restricted, and they were soon extended to the whole kingdom—each county being rated at a particular sum, which was afterwards assessed upon individuals. The information upon this subject to be found in the State Papers is most voluminous. Every detail in the history of the levy of ship-money—the opposition the tax encountered, the sums annually raised by the tax, the mode in which it was collected, are all described, either by the officials of the Government or by private persons, with great minuteness. A bulky volume, containing new and interesting matter, could be written alone upon this subject from the mass of materials now brought to the light by the careful editors of these Calendars. Like our income tax, ship-money was not only a wealthy addition to the

revenue, but it was collected with great facility. Within the limits of his jurisdiction the Sheriff was made personally responsible for the collection. His instructions from the Council were comprised in two words—demand, and in cases of non-payment distrain. The strictest supervision was maintained so that the Sheriffs should not neglect their duties. One Edward Nicholas, who had been Secretary at the Admiralty, and who was now one of the clerks of the Council, was appointed to correspond with the Sheriffs and specially to watch their payments. Every Saturday the Treasurer of the Navy, to whom the Sheriffs remitted their money, made up his books, and forwarded to Nicholas a written account of all the sums received by him under the current writs, and also of the amounts which still remained unpaid from every county ; whilst Nicholas, in his turn, was directed to submit these accounts every week to the personal cognizance of the Sovereign, at the customary meeting of the Council held every Sunday. By this system of checks, the whole facts connected with the levy appeared at a glance. The Sheriffs were responsible to the Treasurer of the Navy, the Treasurer of the Navy was responsible to the Clerk of the Council, the Clerk of the Council was responsible to the Sovereign. If any Sheriff failed to duly render his accounts, he was at once reprimanded by Nicholas and ordered to pay in his money by a certain day, or in default to appear personally before the Council. In important cases he was even summoned to appear before Charles himself to give account of his stewardship.

The sums raised by this tax were expended on the navy ; but as the imposition was entirely arbitrary, the majority of the country, though of opinion that a powerful fleet was very desirable, both for the credit and safety of the kingdom, yet considered the establishment of a naval force as a very unequal recompense for the national liberties which were thus being sacrificed in the cause of maritime protection. In the correspondence preserved amongst the State Papers, this feeling of hostility towards the tax is one of the most important features in the history of the period. Sheriff after Sheriff complained that he could not get the chief constables of the Hundreds to assess the inhabitants. Several of the Sheriffs, like Francis Goddard of Wiltshire, aware of the unpopularity they incurred in levying this detested tax, were 'full of fear at keeping so large a sum in a single weak house, standing far from neighbours, and all the country being acquainted with the fact of the money being in their possession,' and were most anxious to know how such large amounts should be transmitted to London. This difficulty of remittance seems to have been so great that several Sheriffs, afraid to trust the sums they had collected with such distasteful labour out of their own hands, begged permission to bring the money themselves up to London, a request which was uniformly granted by the Council. The power of distress given by the writ was fully used, but we read complaint after complaint from the different Sheriffs, that the people, banded together by the sympathy of oppression, refused to purchase the articles thus distrained. In

Northamptonshire, in Oxfordshire, in Yorkshire, in Wiltshire, in Essex, in Derbyshire, in Shropshire, in London, grave difficulties arose; individuals assessed refused to subscribe their amounts, and cheerfully suffered imprisonment in the sacred cause of liberty. Every obstacle was placed in the way of the Sheriffs whilst in pursuit of their duties—the parish authorities withheld from them the necessary information, the constables were rebellious, collectors could not be found to gather the tax, and as the unhappy Sheriffs were rendered personally liable for the amount they were instructed to obtain, many of them who were short in the sums received preferred to make up the deficiencies themselves rather than appear before the King and his dreaded Council.

‘Scarcely a county,’ writes Mr. Bruce, ‘was without its complaint; and what with charges of over-assessment on the one hand, and refractoriness, as it was termed, in non-payment on the other, the Council, Nicholas, and the referees in cases of difficulty were kept fully employed in this naval business.’ Of the great opponent to this tax little is to be ascertained from a perusal of the State Papers. The information touching Hampden and his memorable resistance is so meagre, whilst petty and insignificant details are related at full length, as to appear intentional. There is one entry in these volumes headed ‘Papers relating to the case of ship-money between the King and John Hampden,’ but the papers contain only what can easily be obtained elsewhere—notes of the arguments of the law advisers of the Crown and of the Judges. The cause of this blank in the

continuity of the State Paper evidence is thus briefly accounted for by Mr. Bruce :—‘It was a case,’ he says, referring to the trial, ‘which official people not engaged in it were probably not very willing openly to notice.’

By his arbitrary proceedings, his forced loans, his unconstitutional courts of law, the King had aroused a dangerous spirit of disloyalty in the nation, which only wanted opportunity to break out into revolt. He was now to cross the Tweed, and wound where they were most vulnerable the feelings of a people whose temper was as bold as their religious prejudices were strong. Worked upon by the mischievous suggestions of Laud, Charles resolved to carry out the ecclesiastical policy in Scotland which his father before him had endeavoured to establish. He would crush the dangerous independence of Presbyterianism by forcing every kirk and assembly from Wick to Berwick to accept the hated Five Articles which James had drawn up. The Holy Communion was to be received kneeling ; in cases of sickness or other necessity the Lord’s Supper was to be administered in private houses ; under similar circumstances Baptism was to be administered in the same manner ; the great fasts and feasts ordained by the Church were to be observed ; and children were to be brought to the bishop for a blessing. These Articles had been obeyed in some districts, disobeyed in others, but everywhere had given rise to much revolt and dissatisfaction. Charles now determined that the same uniformity which existed in Church matters south of the Tweed should be maintained throughout North

Britain. On July 23, 1637, an order was issued from the Privy Council that the English liturgy was henceforth to be used in all churches and cathedrals of Scotland. The storm of indignation with which the command was received is well known. The congregations refused to listen to the formal words of prayer, and in such places where the minister insisted upon using them he was mobbed, and his church half wrecked by the angry assembly. Riots ensued, and the people, led by the aristocracy and their chief ministers, banded themselves together, and openly opposed the hated innovation. The clauses of the Covenant were framed and eagerly subscribed to by a furious and offended nation. Resistance so overt and determined created considerable consternation in the Council Chamber at Whitehall. The Marquess of Hamilton was sent post-haste to Edinburgh with power to grant ample concessions, and to withdraw the Service Book, the Book of Canons, the Five Articles, and to admit the setting up the Confession of Faith of 1580 as a substitute for the Covenant recently entered into. He was also authorised to publish the proclamation of a General Assembly, to meet at Glasgow on November 20 next, and a Parliament at Edinburgh on May 15, 1639.

These measures failed to throw oil upon the troubled waters; they were regarded by the stern Covenanter as symptoms of weakness rather than of evidence of the Royal clemency. The whole history of the religious conflict that now ensued is described by the State Papers so fully, and with such detail, as to be literary treasure-trove of the deepest value

to the future historian of this period.¹ The General Assembly was held, and the Covenanters, assured of an overwhelming majority, offered no opposition to its meeting. Scarcely had it commenced its deliberations than it was evident that the Episcopalian element was hopelessly beaten. The Covenanters brought forth their resolutions, and they were passed by immense majorities. All the Acts of the Assembly, since the accession of James VI. to the Crown of England, were declared null and void. The Acts of Parliament which affected ecclesiastical affairs were repudiated as having no authority. The Covenant renouncing Popery and Prelacy was ordered to be signed by every one under pain of excommunication, and the press was set to work to promulgate the Acts of the General Assembly. Thus fell at once to the ground that scheme of ecclesiastical policy which James and Charles, with so much thought and with so little consideration for the feelings of certain of their subjects, had originated and attempted to carry out.

The success which had attended upon these measures now caused the Covenanters to quit the defensive and assume the aggressive. 'We are busy here,' writes a Mr. Craig from Edinburgh to Lord Stewart, 'preaching, praying, and drilling; and if his Majesty and his subjects of England come hither they will find a harder welcome than before, unless we be made quit of the bishops.' Instructions were now issued for the defence of the kingdom against the English marching north. Edinburgh was to be the centre,

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, 1639-40.

and communication was to be constantly maintained between the shires and the capital by the appointment of commissioners 'to be entertained at the public charge of their shires, and each commissioner to have allowance of pay for furnishing the watch when it falls upon his shire.' A committee of war from the different presbyteries was selected, which was to have 'a very special care to oversee the trying of all the people able to bear arms in all the shires, in choosing out soldiers, and taking course for the way of their payment,' &c. All the regiments to be enrolled were to be commanded by men of skill, 'and must be sent for out of Germany and Holland.' Every parish was to furnish its quota of men, so that an army be levied in every one of the four quarters of the kingdom. The instructions then concluded with orders as to the manner in which the payment for the troops was to be raised, and a solemn assertion that the soldiers thus massed together were to be employed for no other purpose than 'for the defence of their religion and laws.'

Matters having now come to a crisis, Charles prepared in earnest for war. The State Papers throw much new light upon his proceedings. We see the King accumulating magazines of powder, the monopoly of which he held in his own hands; storing arms in convenient places in the northern counties; and taking measures for the levying and disciplining of the trained bands which were to be equipped and transported at the charge of the several counties, but upon reaching their places of rendezvous were to enter into the King's pay. We read how the guns were taken down from

Landguard Fort, from Harwich, and from some of the castles in the Downs, to be applied to the fortification of the northern towns; how the roads between England and Scotland were stopped to intercept the letters written by the disaffected in England to the Covenanters; how the master gunner, in a petition to the King, 'dares to his great regret to say that there are few gunners in your kingdom at this time who understand the several ranges of ordnance or the use of the mortar;' and how Sir Jacob Astley, the military commissioner, regarded the state of the northern counties—their capacity for defence, the points most threatened, and the route most eligible for the marching and support of an army. After holding many meetings of the Council, and listening to various suggestions how to raise money, a force consisting of 24,000 infantry and 6,000 cavalry was collected by the King. Before starting forth upon his campaign he issued a proclamation declaring the immediate grounds of his quarrel with the Scots.

'We cannot but hold it requisite,' began Charles, 'to give our good subjects timely notice of the Scots' traitorous intentions, which in very many ways appear to us. As, first, by the multitude of their printed pamphlets, or rather, indeed, infamous libels, stuffed full of calumnies against our Royal authority and our most just proceedings, and spreading of them in divers parts of this our kingdom; secondly, by their sending of letters to private persons to incite them against us, and sending some of their fellow-Covenanters to be at private meetings in London and elsewhere to pervert

our good people from their duty, and some of these meetings we know, and some of those letters, lewd enough, we have seen ; thirdly, by their public contemning all our just commands, and their mutinous protesting against them, a course not fit to be endured in any well-ordered kingdom ; fourthly, by their rejecting of the Covenant commanded by our authority, because it was commanded by us ; and, lastly, by their most hostile preparations in all kinds, as if we were not their King, but their sworn enemy.'

The 'traitorous Scots' were not unprepared to resist their foe. Letter after letter among the State Papers shows the measures they had adopted to make a sturdy fight, and the spirit that animated them. With the exception of a small district under the Marquis of Huntley, the whole of the south of Scotland was in the hands of the Covenanters. The few castles which belonged to the King, being inadequately provisioned and garrisoned, were either seized or voluntarily surrendered. The Earl of Argyle, after long temporising, subscribed to the Covenant, and became the chief leader of the party, which now numbered among its adherents the Earls of Rothes, Cassilis, Montrose, Lindsey, Dalhousie, and Lothian, and the Lords Sinclair and Balmerino. The Scotch officers who had acquired fame in the German wars, especially under the great Gustavus, were invited over, and the chief commands in the army entrusted to them. Colonel Leslie, a soldier of great experience, and who had seen much service on the Continent, was appointed General-in-Chief. Forces were regularly enlisted and disci-

plined, and the Scottish Borders put in a state of defence against England. Nor were the men ill-equipped. 'I have inquired,' writes Sir Jacob Astley, who had been sent north to prepare the country for the campaign, 'what arms the Scotch Borderers are armed withal. They have all muskets and pikes, so as our Bordering men must be so likewise, and think no more of bows, spears, jacks, and skull-caps.'

This energetic action was strongly stimulated by the religious prejudices of the people. To the staunch Presbyterian, who refused to bow at the Sacred Name; who regarded the sign of the Cross as one of the devices of the Scarlet Woman; who hated prelacy; and who detested all prayers that were not extempore, death was far more preferable than the extinction of his ancient form of worship. In the private letters among the State Papers we see how stern and uncompromising was this feeling. The people will have nothing to do with 'scurvy priests;' they hope 'that the same God that strengthened the arm of the land of Sweden against Germany will strengthen Scotland against England;' both 'the King and England are rending that they will never knit again, and it shall be seen hereafter that it is to their great prejudice;' there 'were never any bishops in the old time before, neither will they have any now; for they have banished them all out of Scotland, and swear that they shall never come in more, for if they do the women will beat out their brains with stones.' The fury of the Scotchwomen against the innovations meditated by Laud rose almost to insanity. 'They say,' writes Lady Westmoreland, 'the

women of Scotland are chief stirrers of this war.' According to Edward Norgate, the women cursed and swore, 'wishing their husbands' and children's flesh to be converted into that of dogs, and their souls annihilated, is the word, or damned the meaning, if they refuse to come into the Covenant, or ever consent to admit of the bishops.'¹

The storm which the bigotry of Laud and the short-sighted policy of Charles had aroused considerably disconcerted the Government at home. 'We daily meet in Council,' writes the Lord-Admiral Northumberland, 'but to little purpose, for, in my opinion, we are but just where you [Viscount Conway] left us. Divers trivial things have been argued amongst us, but yet the King declares not where he expects to have the money that must defray the expense of his army.' The question of supplies was the most harassing of all the difficulties that the King now had to contend with. He had resolved not to appeal to the hated system of Parliament, yet the troops now massed together to subdue Scotland must be maintained. Encouraged by the triumph he had gained in the case of the ship-money, he now revived a still more obsolete custom. The feudal claim to military service was re-established. Letters were issued to all members of the aristocracy requiring them in person to attend the King in his march northwards, with their retinues. By this course, Charles was assured that twelve hundred horse could be raised and maintained without any charge upon the Royal purse. Similar letters were sent to the 'Judges, Inns

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, June 5, 1639.

of Court, and Inns of Chancery,' but instead of military service they were required to lend the King such sums as they thought fit. The clergy were also assessed; 'every Dean and Chapter at 200 marks, and the rest of the clergy at three shillings and sixpence in the pound. The bishops were left to a voluntary contribution.' Thus, what with forced loans, voluntary contributions; and the revival of mediæval taxes, the army was ready to take the field by the end of March, 1639.

Disintegrating influences were, however, strongly at work in the camp. The distribution of the military commands had given great dissatisfaction to many of the nobles; the presence of the King was strongly disapproved of, and was declared by the Earl of Bristol to be 'against all rule of military and politic discipline;' whilst the soldiery were a disordered rabble, who on their march north amused themselves by robbing the districts they passed through, and offering rude caresses to the women. The plan of the campaign had been drawn up by Charles with no little skill. At the head of a considerable force he was to march into Scotland from Berwick; Wentworth, with an army of Irish recruits, was to land in the Clyde; the Marquis of Hamilton was to command a fleet of sixteen sail, which was first to land 5,000 men in the north of Scotland, and then to take up a station for general assistance in the Firth of Forth; the Marquis of Huntley, the head of the Roman Catholic party in Scotland, was to secure the north of Scotland, and then to march southwards and unite with the King; whilst

the Earl of Antrim was to invade Argyleshire with another Irish army of 10,000 men.


This military programme, like many other military programmes, was excellent on paper, but when it was being practically carried out, failures and deficiencies which had not been anticipated were painfully visible. Hamilton 'anchored betwixt the two little isles or Inches' in the Firth of Forth, and did nothing, or, according to the narrative of one James Gordon, he did worse than nothing, for 'the fleet did more hurt to the King who sent them than the enemy.' The Irish recruits did not arrive. Huntley in the north was powerless against the tactics of the lords of the Covenant. The soldiers were ill-fed, their pay was in arrears, sickness broke out in the camp, whilst both amongst officers and men the war was unpopular, being regarded as impolitic and unconstitutional, and as a threat against the civil and religious liberties of England. On arriving at Berwick, Charles, who seems to have felt keenly that the sympathies of his soldiers were in favour of the foe, was not indisposed to come to terms. Nor were the Covenanters opposed to attaining their ends by pacific means. From the State Papers it is evident that Leslie might on several occasions have snatched an easy victory during this campaign had he so wished. It was, however, his object to avoid as long as possible actual hostilities, for whether vanquished or triumphant, he deemed either result would be detrimental to the cause of the Covenant : if victorious, the martial spirit of England would be aroused and a new and more powerful army speedily collected ; if van-

quished, the hopes of the Covenanters would have been dashed to the ground. 'General Leslie,' writes Dr. Watts, 'chaplain-in-chief of the Scotch forces, is absolutely of opinion not to come to a pitched battle with the King's army, not of conscience but out of judgment, his reason being that if the Scotch army be beaten they will hardly be able to draw another army into the field ; whereas, if the King should chance to lose the day his Majesty might easily raise another army.'

Between enemies, one of whom is averse to fight, whilst the other is in favour of a pacific policy, the conclusion of a peace is seldom a matter of much difficulty. Interviews took place between the King and the Scotch Commissioners, and it was at last stipulated that Charles should withdraw his fleet and army ; that within forty-eight hours the Scotch should dismiss their forces ; that the forts of the King should be restored, the royal authority be fully recognised, and a General Assembly and a Parliament be immediately summoned in order to redress all grievances. In his turn the King agreed to remove the great stumblingblock of offence ; he confirmed his former concessions, abrogating the canons, the liturgy, and the High Commission, and abolished the order itself of bishops for which he had so zealously contended. To those who wish to study the history of the negotiations that occurred on this occasion, we beg to refer them to the State Paper, June 14, 1639, containing the 'Journal of Events at the English Camp, extending from the 6th to the 14th June, 1639,' written by the Lord-General for the information of Archbishop Laud. This peace is called the

Pacification of Dunse Law, or more commonly the Treaty of Berwick.

The truce was, however, of short duration, for soon after the pacification had been signed the conduct of the Scotch again aroused all the bitterest feelings of the King. Charles complained that, in spite of his past clemency, his subjects north of the Tweed were doing all in their power to excite the resumption of hostilities. They circulated amongst the English aristocracy seditious papers against the Royal authority; instead of disbanding their forces, as had been agreed upon, they continued to keep all their officers in readiness, and in their pay; they refused to make full restitution of the forts, castles, and ammunition, as stipulated; they continued to hold unlawful meetings upon matters of State; they proved their disloyalty by their actions at the meeting of their General Assembly; and they refused to recognise the Royal authority over their Parliamentary proceedings. But what excited most the anger of the King was his having intercepted a letter, subscribed by certain of the leading Covenanters, to the French King, asking for aid. It was addressed, 'Au Roy,' 'a subscription only employed in France from those subject to their natural prince, and thus implied that the Covenanters had intended to transfer their allegiance to Lewis XIII.,' and had 'practised to let in foreign power into our kingdom of Scotland.' It has been generally supposed that the original letter had reached its destination; but from the declaration of the King, preserved among the State Papers, such appears not to have been



the case. 'For my part,' says Charles, 'I think it was never accepted of by him. Indeed, it was a letter to the French King, but I know not that ever he had it; for by chance I intercepted it, as it was going unto him; and thereupon I hope you will understand me right in that. But because the world shall see that we charge the Scotch not but upon very good and sure grounds, we have thought it fit to set down here their own letter; of which we have given our good brother, the French King, an account, being confident he will not assist any rebels against us.' Hence it is clear that the letter was made known at the French Court, not through the Covenanters, but through the channel of the English Embassy.

Distracted by conflicting opinions, anxious to uphold his prerogative by a war against Scotland, yet ignorant how to obtain the supplies for such an undertaking, Charles had recourse to the advice of one whom hitherto he had seldom consulted upon English affairs, but whose brilliant rule in Ireland had now proved him to be the most consummate statesman around the throne. He wrote to Wentworth. He wished, he said, to consult him respecting the army; 'but I have much more,' he added, 'and indeed too much to desire your counsel and attendance for some time, which I think not fit to express by letter more than this—the Scots Covenant begins to spread too far.' Wentworth, though shattered in health, hastened at once to obey the Royal wish. He arrived in London in the November of 1639, and became the most prominent member of that secret council,

composed of the King, Laud, and Hamilton, which now managed the affairs of the nation. He had been opposed to the first campaign against Scotland, wishing the King to obtain his ends by any other course 'than that of shedding the blood of his Majesty's own natural, albeit rebellious subjects;' but when the conduct of the Scotch subsequent to the treaty of Berwick was laid before him, he declared at once for war. His next counsel has never before been divulged, until the State Papers have been made to yield their secrets. Wentworth, the imperious, the despotic, the man who hated all interference with control, advised *the immediate calling of a Parliament!* 'I believe,' writes the indefatigable Nicholas to Sir John Pennington, who was then absent in the Downs in command of the Channel Fleet, 'you will have heard before this can come to your hands of his Majesty's resolution to call a Parliament about the end of March or beginning of April next, whereof his Majesty made a public declaration this day se'nnight (Dec. 5), sitting in Council, and it is said that it hath been *the Lord Deputy who hath persuaded the King to a Parliament.* I pray God it may succeed as well for the good of the kingdom as the news of it is acceptable to all men in this kingdom.'

The raising of supplies now occupied the attention of Wentworth. He pledged himself to bring over a large subsidy from Ireland. He proposed a loan in England, and subscribed to it, by way of example, the enormous sum of 20,000*l.*, equal to 100,000*l.* of our money. 'Divers of our great lords councillors,' writes Nicholas, 'have declared to

his Majesty that they will lend him large sums of money—viz., the Lord Deputy, 20,000*l.*; the Lord Keeper, 10,000*l.*; the Lord Privy Seal and Earl of Newcastle, 10,000*l.* apiece, and so divers others, to the value of 300,000*l.* in all.' Then, after having superintended the preparations for the organising of an army, Wentworth proceeded to return to his own kingdom. He was now to have his reward. He had frequently solicited an earldom, but Charles, whether he preferred to grant favours without being asked, or whether, from some peculiarity in his mental constitution, he liked at times to snub those who had served him best, had invariably turned a deaf ear to the request. Wentworth, however, had no occasion now to grumble that all arrears due to past service were not fully paid up. He crossed St. George's Channel as Earl of Strafford and Baron Raby; the Star of the Garter glittered upon his breast, whilst, for the first time since the days of Essex, he was invested with the title of Lieutenant-General of Ireland. On his arrival he performed what he had promised. The obedient Irish Parliament agreed to levy 8,000 men for the King's service out of Ireland, and voted a supply of four entire subsidies from the laity of 45,000*l.* each, and six subsidies from the clergy, who already owed them more, 'so that their nine subsidies and our four subsidies,' writes Lord Thomas Cromwell, 'will all be paid in three years if God say Amen.' These generous proposals settled, the practical Strafford returned to England to assist the King in organising the army and selecting the officers.

Here we take our leave of these deeply interesting

Papers. The volumes relating to the termination of the second Scotch campaign, the proceedings of the Long Parliament, the Civil War, and the execution of the King, remain still to be calendared. It is, however, no secret that the domestic State Papers, after the year 1640, are as meagre in bulk as they are in interest. Various causes have led to this result. During the Civil War numerous documents were purposely destroyed by the Parliamentary party; the officials appointed to preserve the Papers were not in power, whilst their unguarded repositories were freely ransacked by the enemy. Ministers of the Crown, anxious that their documents should not be lost or fall into hostile hands, took charge of them themselves (hence the existence of official papers in private collections), whilst many of the State Papers, which travelled about with the King, were captured by the foe and destroyed or subsequently printed in different collections.

‘During the early years of Charles the First,’ writes Mr. Bruce, in his preface to the first volume of these Calendars, ‘the number of Papers is very great. It continues to be so during the administration of the Duke of Buckingham, and until after the peace with Spain. For a few years after 1630 the Papers are much less numerous. From 1634 there is again an increase, and as the time of the final public troubles approaches they are greatly augmented. For 1639 and 1640 they are as numerous as in 1625 and 1626. From an early period in the succeeding year there is a great falling off, and the Papers of the last eight years of the reign will

not occupy more space than those of the two bustling years which are included in the present volume (1625-1626). The cause of this inequality is obvious. The greater the variety and importance of public business, the larger the number of Papers. The early years of the reign, which were years of war and foreign and maritime expeditions, produced most extensive collections; the endeavour to defray the expenses of Government by the levy of ship-money gave rise to much new business and to many Papers. But the State Paper Office, it will be remembered, was the King's repository, and the officers who transmitted Papers thither were his servants. When the fatal quarrel arose between the King and the Parliament, and the King retired from London, these officers followed his person to York, to Oxford, and elsewhere. They carried about their Papers with them, or deposited them in places not within the enemy's quarters. Few found their way into the State Paper Office, except those which were captured on the field of battle, or came into possession of the Parliament by some of the other chances of a state of warfare.'

THE LANCASHIRE WITCHES.

From elves, hobs and fairies,
From fire-drakes or fiends,
And such as the devil sends,
Defend us, good Heaven.


Monsieur Thomas. Act. iv. sc. 6.

IN those 'good old times' we love to talk about—when education was restricted to a superstitious and rapacious clergy, when our poor were serfs, and our ruling classes warriors with predatory instincts, when Government signified an extortionate monarch and a weak council, or an extortionate council and a weak monarch, when life and property were subject to all the vicissitudes of insecurity, when, in fact, our country was the 'merrie, merrie England' of the ballad-monger—in those dear old days, which will never, we sigh, come back again, few influences were more implicitly believed in, or more frequently invoked, than the powers of witchcraft. If an elderly gallant wished to gain the affections of some reluctant maiden, he sought out the aid of a neighbouring witch to foretell his future, or to provide him with a love-potion. If a competitor wished his rival to be utterly defeated in the struggle between them, the services of the hag of magic were appealed to, and her counsel

obeyed. The soldier-sovereign, uncertain as to the results of the war he was about to undertake, summoned the supposed agent of the nether world into his presence, and bade her divine the fortune in store for him. The invalid, mistrustful of the lore of his physician, felt the blood within his veins surge with new life as he followed the instructions inspired by witchcraft. To the arts of 'the daughter of Satan' all resorted, as to the one great, last resource. The farmer whose cattle had been struck down with disease, the childless wife who longed, with the craving of the barren, for offspring, the jealous beauty who prayed for her rival to be ill-favoured, the village household anxious to ward off an approaching pestilence, the lover whose suit would not prosper, all went secretly to the grotto or cottage of the witch, and pleaded as supplicants for her aid. If she could not assist them, their condition was indeed, they felt, outside the region of all hope.

And yet, though the temple was thronged with worshippers, the idol was treated as the most degraded and contemptible of objects. A witch, in the earlier centuries of our history, in spite of the power with which she was credited, was among the most persecuted creatures on the earth. She lived apart from her fellows, in lone and secluded haunts. She was shunned, with the fear that dared not give open expression to its feelings, by all with whom she came in contact, and it was often with difficulty she obtained the bare necessities of life. At any moment she was liable to be tracked to her lair, to be seized and mercilessly exposed, and to be

put to a cruel death. Her children, looked upon as the issue of hell, bore the stain of their descent down to the third and fourth generation, and were often forced to seek their livelihood in distant provinces. Nor was it only upon the professional witch that these severities might be inflicted. It was open to any malignant or credulous person to accuse her neighbour of dealings with the devil, and to subject her to all the penalties which such proceedings then entailed. A spiteful woman had only to seek out the nearest magistrate and inform him that a witch was in their midst, and that she had been seen kissing the devil in the shape of a cat, or riding through the air on a besom, or using miraculous charms to do hurt to a neighbour, or disfiguring her body with significant marks and gashes, for a warrant to be instantly made out, and the unhappy accused to be branded with a hot iron, in order to see whether such application would burn her flesh, or to be dragged through a pond, with her thumbs and toes tied across, to test if water had the power to drown her, or to be scratched with pins to see if blood would flow, or to be tied to a stool for twenty-four hours whilst deprived of all sleep and nourishment, or to be tortured till she wept—for it was held that a witch could only shed three tears, and those from her left eye—or to endure other like pains and penalties. Frequent instances occur, in the history of this peculiar form of superstition, of innocent girls, upon the evidence of pure malice, being torn from their homes and put to a painful death, for machinations of which they knew nothing, and for arts they had



never pretended to possess. In those good old times the charge of witchcraft was the easiest method of getting rid of an unpopular neighbour; the testimony brought forward, if once believed in (and it was seldom rejected), the fire or water ordeal necessarily followed; and the ordeal, whether the victim was a witch or no, was generally sufficient either to kill her or to send her raving mad.

The history of this subject is somewhat curious. From reference to our statute book it appears that witchcraft was one of the oldest and most deeply rooted articles of the superstitious belief of the English people. In the 'Pœnitential' of Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, composed in the seventh century, we read that 'those who deal in charms, those who work people's destruction, or endeavour to gain their love by witchcraft, those who consult diviners, magicians, and enchanter, and those who raise tempests, are to be subject to punishments varying from one to three years' fasting upon bread and water.'¹ Early in the following century, under Egbert, twelve months' penitence was enjoined upon a woman who exercised witchcraft, but should death ensue from her arts the sentence of seven years' penitence was passed upon her. During the reign of King Edgar it was urgently recommended by the Church that 'every priest zealously promote Christianity, and totally extinguish every heathenism; and forbid well-worshippings, necromancies, divinations, enchantments, and man-worship-

¹ *Proceedings against Dame Alice Kyteler*, edited by Thomas Wright. Camden Society.

pings ; also the vain practices which are carried on with various spells, and with many various delusions, with which men do much of what they should not.' In the law of the Northumbrian priests it was ordered that 'if any one be found that shall henceforth practise any heathenship, or in any way love witchcraft or worship idols, if he be a King's thane let him pay ten half-marks : half to Christ, half to the King.' By the early English, witchcraft was rightly considered as one of the most dangerous relics of paganism, and, so far as it was supposed to be a means of inflicting personal injury, was classed with murder and subject to the same penalty. 'We have ordained,' decreed King Athelstan, 'respecting witchcraft, that if any one should be thereby killed, the life of the witch be liable.' It was, however, not until the Church had ranged witchcraft as among the most virulent of all the heresies, that the disciples of the magic art were made to feel the lash of persecution in all its full severity. Witches were tortured, were burnt, were pressed to death, were drowned. Then, as those who believed in sorcery were generally men of some independence in thought and action, the charge of witchcraft gradually became a very favourite accusation of the Romish Church, wherewith to punish all who separated from her fold. Early in the fourteenth century the Waldenses were accused, amongst other things, of communion with the devil, who it was alleged appeared to them in the form of a cat, and whom they kissed under his tail ; also of riding on sticks rubbed with a certain ointment, which carried them in a moment to their

place of assignation ; and of swearing fealty to the evil one as to their acknowledged lord. These charges were likewise brought against the followers of Wicklif, and in later times against the Huguenots. Indeed, as our history progressed the crime of witchcraft became so easy to assert and so hard to disprove, that this offence soon established itself as the most popular of all accusations. Through its agency a heretic was suppressed, an unpopular personage got rid of, and in several instances statesmen were even found not above employing it as a means of political vengeance. Still, in spite of all deterrents, the witches continued to drive a most flourishing trade, and to find, even among their persecutors, numerous lavish and credulous believers. Thus we read of Henry IV. giving directions to the Bishop of Norwich ‘to search for and arrest witches and sorcerers of different kinds, reported to be very numerous in your diocese, and to convert them from their evil ways or bring them speedily to punishment.’

Ludicrous as the powers appear to us at the present day with which witchcraft in former times was credited, such powers seem never to have been denied or disputed by the great minds of the past. A witch was all that was abominable, and to be held in the strongest loathing ; yet few had the wisdom or the courage to contradict the possibility of her exercising the arts she pretended to. The judge, as he passed sentence upon the condemned woman, trembled lest her fell gaze should bring upon him and his household sorrow or death. The yelling crowd, as it half stripped her to undergo

the water ordeal, shuddered as it saw upon her exposed bosom the marks which, it was supposed, proved that she allowed her 'familiar' to draw upon her life's blood. The villagers who went miles out of their way to avoid her haunts, never for one moment believed that the object of their fear was powerless to work them evil, and was either a half-mad woman, the victim of a hideous delusion, or else the actress of a knavish part to suit her own vile ends. To all, the old crone, with her tall hat, crutch stick, and black cat nestling on her shoulder, was one who had dealings with the devil, and who, through the might of Satanic aid, could scatter the seeds of misery broadcast wherever she listed. She had sold herself body and soul to hell, and until death claimed her, her power to effect evil, it was alleged, was unlimited. The great man is he who rises superior to the prejudices of his age; but before the end of the seventeenth century—with the exception of Bodin, Erastus, Reginald Scot, John Wagstaffe, and Dr. Webster—there were none who had the boldness or the knowledge to brand witchcraft as a base and palpable superstition. We find Lord Bacon gravely prescribing 'henbane, hemlock, mandrake, moonshade, tobacco, opium, and other soporiferous medicines,' as the best ingredients for a witch's ointment. From the pages of his 'History of the World' we see that the gifted and practical Sir Walter Raleigh was a firm believer in this childish form of superstition. The learned Selden, in his 'Table Talk,' whilst pleasantly discoursing on the subject of witches, shows that he also held the same faith. Sir Thomas Browne, the

kindest of physicians ; Sir Matthew Hale, one of the most acute and spotless of judges ; Hobbes, the sceptic ; ' the eminent Dr. More of Cambridge,' and the patient and thoughtful Boyle, all were of opinion that witchcraft was an evil capable of solid proof, and that its disciples merited sharp and swift punishment. It was not until the dawn of the eighteenth century that men came to the conclusion that the devices of 'witches and witchmongers' were only so many tricks and fables, and utterly unworthy of credence. The last judicial execution in England for witchcraft took place in the year 1716, when a woman and her little daughter were hanged at Huntingdon 'for selling their souls to Satan.' Since that date, however, various cases have occurred of women, accused as witches, being drowned whilst undergoing the ordeal by water at the hands of their intimidated yet infuriated neighbours.

It was only natural that an offence like witchcraft, so elastic in its details, and so capable of being transformed into an engine of oppression for the gratification of personal or political hate, should have given rise to various curious proceedings in our administration of justice. To the lover of out-of-the-way literature there is little reading more weird and interesting than is to be found in the study of our witch trials.¹ Women, perfectly innocent of the crimes imputed

¹ Read the *Discoverie of the Three Witches of Warboys*, 1593 ; the trial of Amy Duny and Rose Cullender, at Bury St. Edmund's, in 1664 ; the *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, by Reginald Scot, 1584 ; *A Dialogue concerning Witches and Witchcraft*, by George Gifford, Minister of God's Word in Maldon, 1593 ; the *Trial of Witchcraft*, by John Cotta, 1616 ; *A Candle in*

to them, under the terrors of torture, or in the hope to escape punishment, freely confessed themselves guilty of misdeeds they had never imagined, with an elaboration of detail almost sufficient to convince the most sceptical listener. The envoy of the devil was vividly described; the terms he imposed as the price of a lost soul were fully entered into; the course he suggested his victim to pursue; the places of rendezvous he appointed; the homage he required to be paid him; the different forms of disguise he adopted, and the like, were all clearly and precisely described—statements which often tended to show that either the unhappy woman had been well counselled as to her answers, or that she was in an advanced stage of insanity. Of all these trials, the most well-known are the proceedings in the early part of the seventeenth century against a band of wretched creatures, called the Lancashire Witches. The story is as follows.

In the barren wilds of the Forest of Pendle, once a portion of the great wood of Blackburnshire, there had lived for many years before our first James had been summoned from Edinburgh to ascend the throne of England, two old women, who with their families constituted the most important part of the population of the neighbourhood. The names of these aged dames were Elizabeth Southernns and Ann Whittle; but to the votaries of witchcraft they were only known as 'Old Demdike' and 'Old Chattox.' Both women were

the Dark, or a Treatise concerning Witches and Witchcraft, by Thomas Ady, M.A., 1656; *The Question of Witchcraft debated*, by John Wagstaffe, 1669; and the *Proceedings against Dame Alice Kyteler*, 1324.

nearly eighty years of age, and had lived in the direst poverty, occasionally relieved by mendicancy until public opinion had taken it into its head to endow them with the powers of natural magic. And now visitors flocked to the miserable hovels in Pendle Forest for love-potions, poisons, washes, and waxen images, that if melted would render the barren fruitful. The two old crones began to flourish, and since the business which had been forced upon them appeared a very paying concern, both Old Demdike and Old Chattox were much too wise in their generation to deny the arts with which they were credited. Each acted her part with much cunning and mystery; but, as two of a trade seldom agree, feuds and bickerings soon broke out between the competing witches. Old Demdike declared that she was the only genuine agent of the devil, that all her wares were efficacious, and that those who went elsewhere obtained but a spurious article. Old Chattox retorted in the same mercantile spirit, and thus it came to pass that the inhabitants in the forest began to be divided into two rival parties—one party upholding the excellence of Old Demdike, whilst the other party believed only in her competitor. For some years these two elderly ladies appear to have driven a lucrative trade in superstition, and to have found that their lines had fallen in pleasant places. On the accession of James I., however, Nemesis, then travelling in the north in search of victims, paid them one of her unpleasant visits.

Our 'British Solomon' took a singular interest in witchcraft; he firmly believed in the existence of witches,

as is proved by his work entitled 'Dæmonologie,' and he was resolved to stamp out the whole brood in the country. Shortly after his accession he caused to be enrolled in the statute book an Act to suppress the crimes of sorcery, necromancy, and witchcraft, which is among the most sanguinary that its pages have ever had to record. By this Act it was decreed 'that all persons invoking any evil spirit, or concealing, covenanting with, entertaining, employing, feeing, or rewarding any evil spirit; or taking up dead bodies from their graves, to be used in any witchcraft, sorcery, charm, or enchantment; or killing, or otherwise hurting any person by such infernal arts, shall be guilty of felony without benefit of clergy, and suffer death.' The consequences of the creation of this authority were to overrun the country with informers, to sacrifice innocent persons freely to the credulity of the age, and to permit many ordinary casualties—the burning of a rick, the falling sick of cattle, the sudden death of the ailing, and the rest—to be attributed, in want of better interpretation, to the incantations of witchcraft.

With this statute in active force, it was scarcely likely that the proceedings of such notorious dames as Old Demdike and Old Chattox would escape notice. A warrant was made out by the Lancashire magistrates for the apprehension of the two women, and they were committed to take their trial at the next assizes. Justice, however, was not content with securing the persons of the two chief offenders, but was determined to destroy the

whole brood, and accordingly there were lodged in the prison cells at the same time, Elizabeth, daughter of Old Demdike; James Device, her son; Anne Redfern, daughter of Old Chattox; Alice Nutter, and others; whilst a little girl—Jennet Device, the granddaughter of Old Demdike—was kept free, to act as witness against her family. Old Demdike had not long been within the walls of the gaol before she drew up a full statement of her past history, for the benefit of the magistrates then investigating her case. She confessed that about twenty years ago she had met the devil in Pendle Forest, ‘in the shape of a boy, the one half of his coat black and the other brown,’ who offered to give her everything she would request in exchange for her soul. Thus tempted she fell, and admitted that she had had frequent resort to her new friend, who said ‘his name was Tibb,’ and who appeared at various times to her ‘in the guise of a brown dog.’ She was now fourscore years old, and had been, she frankly owned, a witch ever since she was thirty. Her home had been for the last half-century in the forest of Pendle—‘a vast place, fit for her profession;’ and there she had ‘brought up her own children, instructed her grandchildren, and took great care and pains to bring them to be witches.’ She pleaded guilty to having bewitched several persons, upon whom vengeance was demanded, so that they died; to having ‘her familiar,’ the brown dog, to bite cattle, so that they soon afterwards perished; and to having brought death in the cup by bewitching the different drinks of men.

This confession was followed by one of a similar charac-

ter from Old Chattox. The ancient dame, however, took the opportunity of attributing her present unhappy position entirely to the evil advice of her former rival. She declared that 'about fourteen years past she entered, through the wicked persuasions and counsel of Elizabeth Southerna, alias Demdike, and was seduced to condescend and agree to become subject unto that devilish, abominable profession of witchcraft.' At the house of Demdike she met the devil, 'who moved that she would become his subject, and give her soul unto him.' At first she refused; 'but after, by the great persuasion made by the said Demdike, she yielded to be at his commandment and appointment.' Upon her consent the devil said that when she wanted to summon him she must call out 'Fancy!' In her statement the old hag confesses having bewitched a young gentleman who attempted to do violence to her daughter, and with causing his death; to having made wax images which slowly wasted away before the fire, so that those whom they resembled might likewise perish; and to having sold potions, destroyed cattle, and poisoned drinks by the art of 'her familiar' Fancy. With the exception of two or three of the accused, all now followed the example of Old Demdike and Old Chattox, and drew up confessions either freely acknowledging their guilt, or attributing their errors to the two aged crones under whom they studied. In the crimes of which they convict themselves there is a great similarity: selling potions and poisons, bewitching persons to a slow and painful death, destroying cattle by wounds inflicted by the evil

one, sucking the breath of young children, and gratifying the desire of the barren in some cases and the promptings of vengeance in others, appear among the chief articles of self-accusation. With the exception of Old Demdike, who died in prison before her trial, the whole of the Lancashire witches, who had established themselves in Pendle Forest, were found guilty and executed August 17, 1612.¹

It is difficult to account for the circumstantial character of these confessions unless they were suggested by the delusions of insanity, or by the pains of torture. The King, it was well known, was the bitter foe of all witches, and magistrates anxious to curry royal favour were assured that there was no better course to gain their ends than to ferret out an ample supply of victims, encourage them to accuse themselves in order to gain their release, then convict them out of their own mouths and send them to the gallows. 'Confessions were so common on those occasions,' writes the learned Mr. Crossley, 'that there is, I believe, not a single instance of any great number of persons being convicted of witchcraft at one time, some of whom did not make a confession of guilt. Nor is there anything extraordinary in that circumstance, when it is remembered that many of them sincerely believed in the existence of the powers attributed to them; and others, aged and of weak understanding, were in a measure coerced by the strong persuasion of their guilt, which all around them manifested, into an acquies-

¹ Potts's *Discovery of Witches in Lancashire*, edited by J. Crossley. Cheetham Society.

cence in the truth of the accusation. In many cases the confessions were made in the hope, and no doubt with the promise, seldom performed, that a respite from punishment would be eventually granted. In other instances, there is as little doubt that they were the final results of irritation, agony, and despair. The confessions are generally composed of "such stuff as dreams are made of;" and what they report to have occurred might either proceed, when there was intention to fabricate, from intertwining the fantastic threads which sometimes stream upon the waking senses from the land of shadows, or be caused by those ocular hallucinations of which medical science has supplied full and satisfactory solution. There is no argument which so long maintained its ground in support of witchcraft as that which was founded on these confessions. It was the last plank clung to by many a witch-believing lawyer and divine. And yet there is none which will less bear critical scrutiny and examination, or the fallacy of which can more easily be shown, if any particular reported confession is taken as a test, and subjected to a searching analysis and inquiry.'

Twenty years after these events had taken place another batch of so-called Lancashire witches was unearthed, of whose proceedings the State Papers of Charles I. furnish a full account. 'The greatest news from the country,' writes one Sir William Pelham to Viscount Conway,¹ 'is of a huge pack of witches which are lately discovered in Lancashire,

¹ May 16, 1634, *State Papers, Domestic*, 1634-5, edited by John Bruce, F.S.A.

whereof it is said nineteen are condemned, and that there are at least sixty already discovered, and yet daily there are more revealed: there are divers of them of good ability, and they have done much harm. It is suspected that they had a hand in raising the great storm wherein his Majesty was in so great danger at sea in Scotland.' Sir William was evidently a firm believer in the arts of diabolical magic, but he somewhat exaggerates the details of this discovery. It appears that for some time past village rumour had reported that in Pendle Forest, precisely on the same site where Old Demdike and Old Chattox had carried on their evil practices, a band of women had congregated which professed to be, in a similar manner, the agents of the powers of darkness. Of these women the presiding spirit was one Margaret Johnson, an elderly crone of sixty, whom country gossip accused of wholesale bewitchery of young children, of the sick and dying, and of cattle grazing in the 'vaccaries,' or the great upland pastures of the neighbourhood. With her, it was said, were associated as accomplices in her vile art, Frances Dicconson, the wife of a husbandman in Pendle Forest, Mary Spencer of Burley, a young girl of twenty, and Alice Hargrave, together with some twenty other women of lesser note.

The proceedings of this little infernal community having been reported to the neighbouring magistrates, a warrant for the apprehension of its leaders was issued, who were at once committed for trial at the next assizes. The chief informer on this occasion was a young lad, Edmund

Robinson, commonly known by the name of 'Ned of Roughts,' the son of a mason in Pendle Forest. Both father and son, it seems, had been in the habit of going from church to church, in the capacity of amateur discoverers of witches, and accusing various members of the different congregations of diabolical arts; and with such success that it is stated 'by that means they got a good living, that in a short space the father bought a cow or two when he had none before.' At the trial young Robinson was sworn, and proceeded to state his case. He was a practised evidence-monger, and there was little hesitation in the story he told from the witness-box. Kissing the book and looking straight at the bench, he said that upon All Saints' Day last he was picking wild plums in the forest with a friend, and whilst thus engaged two greyhounds, a black and a brown one, came running up to him and fawned upon him. He noticed that they had collars round their necks which 'shone like gold,' and that to each of the collars a piece of string was attached. Seeing no one with the greyhounds, he thought 'to hunt with them, and presently a hare did rise very near before him, at the sight whereof he cried Loo ! loo ! but the dogs would not run.' Irritated at this unsportsmanlike conduct he tied the hounds together to a hedge, and was about to give them a good thrashing, when suddenly the black greyhound vanished, and in her place stood Frances Dicconson. Almost immediately afterwards the brown greyhound disappeared, and in her stead appeared a little boy.

Frightened at this transformation, he, the witness, was about to run away, when the woman Dicconson put her hand in her pocket and offered him a shilling, provided he would say nothing about the matter. He declined the money, and called out that she was a witch. 'Whereupon she put her hand into her pocket again, and pulled out a string like unto a bridle that jingled, which she put upon the little boy's head that stood up in the brown greyhound's stead ; whereupon the said boy stood up a white horse.' Young Robinson was now seized by Mother Dicconson, and carried rapidly off to a house called Hoarestones. Here he met numerous other witches who had ridden to the place on horses of various colours, and was offered refreshments, which he refused. 'And presently after, seeing divers of the company going to a barn near adjoining, he followed after, and there he saw six of them kneeling and pulling at six several ropes which were fastened or tied to the top of the house ; at once with which pulling came then in this informer's sight flesh smoking, butter in lumps, and milk as it were straining from the said ropes, all which fell into basons placed under the ropes. And after that these six had done, there came other six, which did likewise, and during all the time of their so pulling they made such foul faces that he became frightened, and was glad to steal out and run home.' On being asked by the court if he were acquainted with any of the women who had been engaged in these practices in the barn, the witness answered that he knew them well by sight, and proceeded to give their names,

to the number of some twenty. His evidence concluded, Robinson was ordered to stand down.¹

The confession of Margaret Johnson—for, of course, according to custom, she had confessed—was then read. The old dame said that some eight years ago, being in her house ‘in a great passion of anger and discontent, and withal pressed with some want,’ there suddenly appeared before her a spirit like unto a man, ‘apparelled in a suit of black tied about with black points,’ who offered, if she would give him her soul, to supply all her needs and stand ever as her firm friend. After ‘a solicitation or two she contracted and covenanted with the said devil for her soul,’ to whom, under the name of ‘Mamil my God,’ she henceforth always applied for what she required. This friend, she admitted, had paid frequent visits to her, now in the shape of a brown coloured dog, then of a hare or white cat, and invariably settled upon her bosom to suck her blood. He often put into her hand gold and silver, ‘but it vanished soon again, and she was ever bare and poor, though he oft gave her the like.’ However, since she had been in trouble the spirit had cruelly deserted her, for she had never seen him whilst in prison.

The poor demented creature then frankly acknowledged her guilt, and mentioned the names of several women who had been her accomplices. In the fulness of her heart she also took this opportunity to reveal one or two of the secrets of her order. Good Friday, she ex-


¹ *State Papers*, July 10, 1634.

plained, was the one great day in the year for the general meeting of witches, when they assembled 'to consult for the killing and hurting of men and beasts.' The marks upon the body denoted the number of familiars a witch could invoke: 'if a witch have but one mark she hath but one spirit; if two, then two spirits; if three, yet but two spirits.' More than two spirits to one agent, Satan would never permit. The men witches were possessed by women spirits, and women witches by men spirits; but witchcraft, she said, was rather the province of women than of men, because as Eve was deceived by the serpent at the beginning, so women, being frailer, were more easily entrapped in the snares of the 'devil. Witches had power 'to cause foul weather and storms;' and if they 'desire to be in any place upon a sudden, their devil or spirit will upon a rod, dog, or anything else, presently convey them thither, yea, into any room of a man's house: still it is not the substance of their bodies, but their spirit assumeth such form and shape as go into such rooms.' Then with a piteous moan she confessed she had no more to say, and could not hope for mercy.¹

Though the example of Margaret Johnson, in admitting her guilt, was followed by several of the accused, there were one or two who, healthy in mind and conscious of innocence, declined to implicate themselves. These loudly affirmed that they were not witches, but honest women, fearing God and serving the King. Speaking up against her informer, Frances Dicconson denied the whole story of the lad Robinson, and

¹ *State Papers*, June 15, 1684.

said that he was a young scoundrel who had been prompted by his father to wrong her because she had refused to sell him a cow, and had also refused to pay the price he had asked for him not to appear against her. But the most curious instance of how, in those days of superstition, the simplest matter could be distorted into a cause for offence, is to be found in the case of Mary Spencer. This young girl was accustomed to go into the village to draw water, and as she went down the steep hill that led to the well, she let the wooden pail she carried roll after her, and as now it followed her, and then she chased it, she, like a healthy merry lass, sang and called after it as if it had been a living creature. For this childish outburst of animal spirits Mary Spencer was accused of witchcraft; it was alleged that the pail followed her about where she listed, and hence was not of wood, but of the devil. Unfortunately, what gave a colour to this assertion was the fact that the girl herself was the daughter of witches, for it appears that both her father and mother had been condemned during the last assizes for professing magic arts. The poor lass was accordingly committed to prison, and sent for trial. At her examination she stoutly denied that she knew any witchcraft, or had ever done hurt thereby to anybody. She had always gone to church, she said indignantly, and could repeat the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. She defied the devil and all his works, and only hoped to be saved by Christ Jesus. She admitted without shame that when she went to the well for water she used 'to trundle the collock or pail down the hill, and she would run



along after it to overtake it, and did overhie it sometimes, and then might call it to come to her;' but she utterly denied that it followed her of its own accord, or that she could ever make it come to her by any witchcraft. Then, after an appeal for mercy to her judges, she said she was a Christian and not afraid of death, for she hoped it would make an entrance for her into heaven.¹

On the revelations contained in these examinations and confessions, seventeen out of this second pack of Lancashire witches were brought in guilty by the jury, and condemned to death. Fortunately, the judge who presided on this occasion was a humane and sensible man, and superior to the prejudices of his day. The evidence against the prisoners failed to satisfy him; he refused to appoint a date for the execution, and referred the case to the King in Council for further consideration. Accordingly, Bridgman, Bishop of Chester, was instructed by Coke and Windebank, the two Secretaries of State, to examine two or three of the most prominent among the condemned. Margaret Johnson was the first to be summoned, and was the most penitent of offenders. After listening to an exhortation from his lordship, the old woman, weeping piteously, sobbed out, 'I will not add sin to sin. I have already done enough, nay, too much, and will not increase it. I pray God I may repent.' The guilt of the others was not so easily arrived at. They denied the charges brought against them, and explained how they had been the sport of the vindictiveness of their

¹ *State Papers*, June 15, 1634.

neighbours. The bishop was nonplussed, and knew not how to separate the truth from the falsehood: 'Conceit and malice,' he writes to the Secretaries of State,¹ 'are so powerful with many in those parts, that they will easily afford an oath to work revenge upon their neighbour:' in fact, his lordship declined to commit himself to an opinion one way or the other.

As a second solution of the difficulty, the matter was now entrusted to medical hands. It was acknowledged that every true witch had certain peculiar marks about her person, which were nothing else than seals impressed by the devil, and by which therefore she could easily be identified. Should these marks be found on the condemned, there was at once an end of the inquiry. Margaret Johnson, Frances Dicconson, Mary Spencer, and one Janet Hargraves, as the most notorious of the offenders, were hastily sent up from Lancaster gaol to the Ship Tavern at Greenwich, where they were for the moment housed. At the same time Alexander Baker and William Clowes, the King's surgeons, were ordered by the Council 'to make choice of midwives to inspect and search the bodies of those women lately brought up by the sheriff of Lancashire indicted for witchcraft, wherein the midwives are to receive instructions from Dr. Harvey, the King's physician, and themselves.'² The examination took place, and the question excited so much interest that the King himself, it is said, was present. It resulted in the doctors coming to the conclusion that on the

¹ *State Papers*, June 15, 1634.

² *Ibid.* June 29, 1634.

bodies of Janet Hargraves, Frances Dicconson, and Mary Spencer they found nothing unnatural ; whilst on the body of Margaret Johnson there were two marks, which were probably the effect of a former application of leeches.¹ 'Such was the mouse which the mountain of witchcraft had delivered.

The evidence for the prosecution having now in a great measure broken down, it struck Secretary Windebank that he would privately examine the lad Edmund Robinson, upon whose sole and unsupported testimony the whole case depended. The boy was removed from the influence of his father, and then the truth came out. Before the stern presence of the Secretary of State the boldness of the witness, who had given so glibly his evidence as to the greyhounds, Mrs. Dicconson, and the meeting at Hoarestones, completely collapsed, and crying for mercy the lad confessed the enormities of which he had been guilty. He admitted that the story he had told to the magistrates concerning the practices of witches was 'false and feigned, and had no truth at all, but only as he had heard tales and reports made by women, so he framed his tale out of his own invention, which, when he had once told, he had to persist in.' The trial of the Lancashire witches twenty years ago had suggested the materials for his story. 'He had heard,' said this charming youth, 'the neighbours talk of a witch feast that was kept at Mocking Tower in Pendle Forest, about twenty years since, to which feast divers witches came, and many were

¹ *State Papers*, July 2, 1634. .

apprehended and executed at Lancaster, and thereupon it came into his head to make the like tale of a meeting at Hoarestones : ' the more especially as Frances Dicconson and the others were reputed by their neighbours to be witches. ' He had heard,' continued this interesting specimen of juvenile depravity, ' Edmund Stevenson say that he was much troubled with Dicconson's wife in the time of his sickness, and that he suspected her of witchcraft ; and he heard Robert Smith say that his wife lying upon her death-bed accused Janet Hargraves to be the cause of her death ; and he heard William Nutter's wife say that Janet and William Devys had bewitched her ; and it was generally spoken that Beawse's wife who went a-begging was a witch ; and he had heard Sharpee Smith say that the wife of John Loynd laid her hand upon a cow of his, after which the animal never rose.' With these materials, and assisted by a vivid imagination unballasted by scruples of any kind whatever, young Robinson confessed he had concocted his story. ' Nobody,' he said, with some pride, ' was ever acquainted with any part of my fiction or invention, nor did anybody ever advise me, but it merely proceeded out of mine own brain.' Like Coriolanus, he could cry, ' Alone I did it !'

The motive for the fabrication of these heinous falsehoods, which had for their object the bringing of innocent people to the gallows, is a terrible instance of how great crimes can sometimes arise from the commission of slight offences. It appears that it was the boy's duty to look after his father's cattle, to drive them home from the

meadows, and to see that they were properly housed in the shed during night. One evening, having been tempted to play with some children, young Robinson found the time had slipped so merrily away, that to his horror he was now too late to go in search of the kine. Fearing a beating from his parents, the ready lie, always the resource of the timid, rose to his lips, and 'he made this tale for an excuse.' Henceforth amusement became easy to him; he could neglect his duty as much as he pleased, and play as often as he chose in the woods and the village streets, for on his return home he had only to give as an excuse that he had not been to the meadows to fetch the cattle because he had been spirited away by a witch, or that he had been frightened by seeing a boy with a cloven foot, or that a woman coming up to him had suddenly transformed herself into a lantern, and he had run away in sheer terror. Before Windebank, Robinson now solemnly denied that there had been any truth in these statements; he had 'but told these tales to excuse himself when he had been at play.'¹ It is some satisfaction to learn that in this instance the biter was severely bit, for both the boy and his father were imprisoned under heavy sentences, whilst the so-called witches were released and had their innocence fully established.

The revelations disclosed at this trial dealt a severe blow to this peculiar form of superstition. It was now seen how easily vindictiveness or lack of principle could trump up a

¹ *State Papers*, July 10 and 16, 1634.

case of witchcraft against persons perfectly guiltless of all diabolical arts, and succeed in bringing their necks to the gallows. It was also seen how terror or a distorted imagination could force, as in the case of Margaret Johnson, the innocent to confess to acts which they had never committed, and which when analysed were but one tissue of mental delusions. Hence when, in the future, accusations of witchcraft were brought against certain individuals, such charges were inquired into by the justices of the peace with a care and a respect for common sense which had hitherto been painfully conspicuous by their absence. Still it was long before the nation emancipated herself from the thralldom of this degrading credulity, and it was not until the middle of the eighteenth century that the law positively declined to consider the 'magic arts' as within the bounds of possibility. Throughout the stormy times of the Civil War, and during the dissolute period of the Restoration, it always went hard with a woman accused of witchcraft, when accidental circumstances appeared to support the charge—when, for example, by a curious coincidence an evil prophecy that she had made had been fulfilled, or when by the buoyancy of her corpulence she failed to sink when pitched into a pond, or when, as in the instance of Margaret Johnson, she had certain marks upon her body, which might be interpreted as the suckling spots of her familiar. We have no occasion to be a student of Buckle to learn that, of all the relics of paganism with which civilisation in its onward march has had to contend, none have been more difficult to eradicate

from the heart of man than that special form of superstition which found one phase of its full development in the study and belief of witchcraft. Even at the present day, in many of our English villages, the power and existence of a witch are still believed in.¹

¹ Since this article was written, the following trial took place. Four women were convicted, June 21, 1881, before the Correctional Tribunal at Charleroi in Belgium, of swindling by means of pretended sorcery. The chief of the gang was a Madame Lignan, who obtained money by pretending to exercise the same art as the most notorious of these Lancashire witches—making up love-potions, healing the sick, pretending to cause death when it suited her, but above all proclaiming her power to assist fortune-hunters in the obtaining of legacies. On this case a morning paper thus comments:—

‘After such revelations as these, which disclose unscrupulous cunning and greed on the one side, and on the other a lamentable amount of avarice and superstition, it is difficult to affirm that the belief in witchcraft is no longer a powerful force on the continent of Europe. We have no reason to suppose that the inhabitants of the particular part of Belgium where Charleroi is situated are more naturally credulous or less educated than other Belgians; certainly they may be judged to be more enlightened than the average Russian peasant. Their complete belief, however, in the power of the Evil One being delegated to such a human instrument as the nefarious Madame Lignan appears to be inseparably bound up with the articles of their religion, and would be quite touching if it were not so extremely ludicrous and so miserably irrational. Yet who shall say that we in England are quite free from the taint of superstition? We burned our last witch so long ago as the beginning of the eighteenth century; but quite lately—in 1863—a reputed wizard was drowned in a pond at the village of Heddingham, in Essex, not forty miles from London; while in 1867 “Dr. Harris” was committed for trial at the Radnorshire Assizes for duping persons into the belief that their ailments were caused by their being “witched,” and for professing to cure them by giving them charms to wear suspended round their necks. Even later than this there have been cases in England of reputed “wise women” having their wisdom and their necromantic abilities tested by the old ordeal of the horse-pond; at the present moment there are thousands of Cornish and Devonshire rustics who believe implicitly in the “evil eye” and in the existence of “brownies;” and the village


witch is quite a popular local institution in various parts of the country. When will railroads, religion, and civilisation all combined, succeed in driving out of the heads of European populations the faith in particular persons being selected as authorised agents of the Powers of Darkness—a belief which has come straight down to us from the bad old days when ignorance, Popery, and cruelty flourished unchecked ? ’

THE GREAT FIRE OF LONDON.

Oh the miserable and calamitous spectacle! such as haply the world had not seen the like since the foundation of it, nor be outdone till the universal conflagration.—JOHN EVELYN.

Lord! what a sad sight it was by moonlight to see the whole city almost on fire, that you might see it plain at Woolwich as if you were by it!—SAMUEL PEPYS.

'1666, 2ND SEPTEMBER. This fatal night, about ten,' writes chatty John Evelyn in his *Memoirs*, 'began that deplorable fire near Fish Street, in London.' How the fire originated we know not, but the flames were first seen to issue from the shop of a French baker, near London Bridge. The progress of the conflagration was fearfully rapid; for everything, it seemed, had conspired to lay the city in ruins. The season had been an exceptionally dry one; a fierce easterly wind was blowing all the while, thus encouraging the fury of the flames; the houses, closely crowded together and built entirely of wood, were incapable of opposing any resistance to the enemy; there was, as there had always been until within comparatively recent times, a terrible lack of water in the City; whilst the engineering appliances to cope with so devouring an element were of the feeblest character. Writers, chiefly foreigners who visited our shores, had fre-



quently raised their voices in warning against the dangers to which we were then exposed from fire. They pointed to the absence of brick and stone in our dwellings, to our narrow streets, to our houses pressing one upon the other without plan or arrangement in their construction, to our want of wells and water supply, and to the lack of men specially trained to fight against a severe conflagration, and keep it under. 'You may fear the Dutch,' said one, 'but a fire in your midst will work you more hurt than all the fleets of Holland and France together.'

This prediction was now to be fulfilled. Before the fatal morning of that September had dawned, all the houses and wharfs on the banks of the Thames, on the Middlesex side, had crashed down and were one heap of charred ruin. The numerous winding streets which ran from Cornhill to the Tower were a mass of smouldering rafters and wrecked goods and chattels. Then rapidly licking their way, the forked flames sped their lurid course due west—up the Poultry, up Cheapside, around the sacred edifice of St. Paul's, down Ludgate Hill and the neighbourhood of Newgate, along Fleet Street and Warwick Lane, till they reached the Inner Temple; the fire, like a swollen river that has burst its dam, and scorns all opposition, swept everything before it. For a moment the flames crossed towards Whitehall, but the wind changing, they were beaten back to complete their work of havoc in the east. From the Temple to the Tower, north and south, east and west, the City was as if it had been laid waste by the enemy. What

had once been flourishing streets and imposing structures were now acres of vacant spaces, strewn with smoking rubbish, charred furniture, and household stuff and dead animals. Here and there, some partly hidden beneath the blackened rafters of fallen buildings, and others lying stark and exposed upon the smouldering heaps of wreck, were a few corpses. St. Paul's, that 'goodly church,' was a sad ruin. The fine halls of the different City companies were levelled to the ground. The statues in the Royal Exchange, of the English sovereigns since the Conquest, had been baked by the heat, and had then burst into a thousand pieces. The fountains, the favourite places of gossip of an evening of the apprentices and the City maidens, were dried up, whilst the water in their basins was hissing forth its heated vapours. All the cellars and warehouses, the crowded goods of which constituted so much of the wealth of the City, were being consumed, and darkened the sky by their spasmodic belchings of black and acrid smoke. 'So that in five or six miles traversing about,' says Evelyn, 'I did not see one load of timber unconsumed, nor many stores but what were calcined white as snow.'

'I am too much affected,' writes an anonymous correspondent to one Pedder, at Newport,¹ 'with the deplorable sight of London's ruin ever again to value the things of this world, seeing all man's labour and riches but a portion that an hour may consume. I heard many cries and complaints; but some gave glory to God in the fire, and wished the por-


¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, edited by Mrs. Green, September 13, 1666.

tion consumed had been more laid out for His glory. In three days the most flourishing city in the world is a ruinous heap, the streets only to be known by the maimed remainder of the churches. These differ about how it began ; but all agree that it was the anger of the Lord for the sins of the people : yet the great ones, like Israel of old, say, "The bricks are fallen, but we will build with hewn stones." Pestilence and fire have come ; Jesus the Lord will empty His quiver of wrath unless the nation improve its privileges. I have lost nothing in the fire : the people are quite stupefied and surprised by it.'

On the first shooting forth of the flames, and the cruel rapidity with which they bore down everything that barred their devastating progress, the inhabitants were utterly paralysed with terror. They appeared incapable of all thought and action. 'The conflagration,' writes Evelyn, 'was so universal and the people so astonished, that from the beginning, I know not from what despondency or fate, they hardly stirred to quench it ; so that there was nothing heard or seen but crying out and lamentation, running about like distracted creatures, without at all attempting to save even their goods. Such a strange consternation there was upon them, so as it burned, both in breadth and length, the churches, public halls, Exchange, hospitals, monuments, and ornaments, leaping after a prodigious manner from house to house and street to street at great distances one from the other : for the heat, with a long set of fair and warm weather, had even ignited the air and prepared the materials

to conceive the fire, which devoured, after an incredible manner, houses, furniture, and everything. Here we saw the Thames covered with goods floating, all the barges and boats laden with what some had time and courage to save ; as, on the other, the carts, &c., carrying out to the fields, which for many miles were strewed with movables of all sorts, and tents erecting to shelter both people and what goods they could get away. Oh the miserable and calamitous spectacle ! such as haply the world had not seen the like since the foundation of it, nor be outdone till the universal conflagration. All the sky was of a fiery aspect, like the top of a burning oven, the light seen above forty miles round about for many nights. God grant my eyes may never behold the like, now seeing above 10,000 houses all in one flame ! the noise, and cracking, and thunder of the impetuous flames, the shrieking of women and children, the hurry of people, the fall of towers, houses, and churches was like an hideous storm, and the air all about so hot and inflamed that at last one was not able to approach it, so that they were forced to stand still and let the flames burn on, which they did for near two miles in length and one in breadth. The clouds of smoke were dismal, and reached upon computation near fifty miles in length. Thus I left it this afternoon burning, a resemblance of Sodom or the last day. London was, but is no more !'

The first shock over, the courage of Englishmen was restored to panic-stricken London, and energetic measures were at once adopted to crush the terrible foe that had so



suddenly and with such malignant force made its presence felt. Constables were stationed at Temple Bar, Clifford's Inn, Fetter Lane, Shoe Lane, and Cow Lane. At each of these five posts soldiers were on guard under the command of a 'good and careful officer and three gentlemen,' who had power to grant one shilling to such as had been diligent in putting out the flames all night. Five pounds in bread, cheese, and beer, were allowed to the men at each post. The trained bands were called out to protect the people's goods in Lincoln's Inn Fields, Gray's Inn Fields, Hatton Garden, and St. Giles's Fields, and a 'great officer' was told off to see that these orders were properly executed.¹ Instructions were sent to the magistrates for Middlesex to procure workmen and tools; the militia of Middlesex, Surrey, and Hertfordshire were called out, 'for prevention of unhappy consequences;' and the crisis was considered so dangerous that the presence of Monk, Duke of Albemarle, who was in command of the fleet, was keenly desired by the agitated Londoners. 'If my Lord General,' writes Lord Arlington to Sir Thomas Clifford, who was then with the fleet, expecting to give battle to the Dutch,² 'could see the condition we are in, I am confident, and so is everybody else, he would think it more honour to be called to this occasion than to be stayed in the fleet, where it is possible he may not have an opportunity of fighting the enemy; but here it is certain he will have it in his hands to give the King his kingdom a

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, September 3, 1666.

² *Ibid.* September 4, 1666.

second time, and the world see therein the value the King makes of him.' Monk complied with the royal wishes, but the fire was extinguished before his return; in his capacity of Lord Lieutenant of Middlesex he however assisted in the subsequent precautions to restore order.

To aid the distressed and to open storehouses for the reception of goods, a proclamation was now issued, ordering that for the supply of the destitute bread was to be distributed gratuitously at the markets held in Bishopsgate Street, Tower Hill, Smithfield, and Leadenhall Street—the ordinary markets having been destroyed—and that all churches, chapels, schools, and public buildings were to be thrown open to receive the goods of those persons who did not know how to dispose of them.¹ No difficulty was experienced in obtaining volunteers to help in extinguishing the flames: the whole population was knit together by the closest of all ties, that of selfish fear. No one knew but that his own house might be the next victim, and the consequence was, that men of all ranks hastened to contribute their personal efforts to quench the fire. The King and his brother were most active during this anxious time. 'He and the Duke of York,' we are told,² 'frequently exposed their persons with few attendants, sometimes even intermixing with those who laboured in the business.'

But it was in the removal of his hardly-saved goods that the citizen was most perplexed. The villages around the

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, September 5, 1666.

² *Ibid.* September 8, 1666.

City—Kingsland, Hackney, Highgate, Edgware, Finchley, and other suburbs—were thronged with rich and poor, guarding the different household goods they had managed to snatch from the avarice of the flames. It was the object of all who had been fortunate enough in saving any property to have it at once carried to a place of security ; to effect this was, however, no easy task. Labour was in such demand, and vehicles of any description were so scarce, that ‘four pounds a load to a carter, and ten shillings a day to a porter,’ were deemed small wages.¹ From the numerous petitions presented to the King for relief, to be found among the State Papers, we can form some idea of the misery and distress which followed in the wake of this wholesale wrecking of property. The parish churches were destroyed, yet the poor were thrown upon the hands of the clergy, and clamoured for relief. The clothiers of Coventry were ruined, for ‘their whole estate of cloth’ had been stored in the City warehouses. Bookbinders, printers, and artificers of all descriptions had lost their entire stock-in-trade, and were left completely destitute. Ships heavily laden with goods in the docks and the river had been set on fire, and their captains, considering that they had a claim on the Government, petitioned the Council for help. Landlords whose houses had been gutted by the flames were beggared. Aldermen and merchants, whose cellars had been stocked with valuable produce, found themselves, within the short space of three days, deprived of the fruits of a lifetime of anxious and

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, September 6, 1666.

honest toil. On all sides we read of nothing but want, ruin, and prayer for relief. 'M. Leroy, jeweller, has had great losses on the fire, and wants to be paid for a diamond ring of the Countess of Castlemaine.' John Ogilby, bookseller, asks for a licence to import paper largely from France, to replace stock, destroyed after twenty years spent 'in setting forth several books in a more noble and heroic way than hath been heretofore done in England.' Nathaniel Hubert petitions for 'an order to the Admiralty Court to take him from Newgate prison, where he lies perishing, and send him to sea, to which he was condemned because in removing the goods of one Serskall during the fire, receiving no reward, he detained goods value 3*s.* 6*d.*, since restored.' One disinterested person, anxious to make a private claim conducive to public utility, sends in a 'Proposal to prevent mischief from aliens, who are suspected to have had a hand in burning the City, by a grant to the writer, on consideration of his sad condition after represented, of a patent whereby no foreigner would remain a night without full information whence he came, where he lodges, &c., and the same of subjects not at their own homes, so that robberies, murders, and other mischiefs may be prevented or discovered.'¹

The only persons who derived benefit from the calamity were those who had nothing to lose. The beggars, the cut-purses, the predatory tramps, the nocturnal prowlers availed themselves to the full of the opportunities which the darkness and desolation around now offered them. They pilfered

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, September 1666.

such goods as they could conveniently carry away with them. They made raids upon the poor who were feebly endeavouring to protect the little they had saved from the flames. Under cover of the smoke, they entered burning houses and seized upon any valuables that came within their reach. Nor did they scruple to stab and then rob those who crossed their path in the purlieus of Thames Street, and whose dress and appearance betokened them to be prizes worth securing. Though constables, the trained bands, and militiamen patrolled the streets, the ruin was so great and the confusion so bewildering that it became no difficult task for the robber and the assassin to escape undetected to his haunts and in safe possession of his booty. 'There are many people,' writes one James Hicks,¹ 'found murdered and carried into the vaults amongst the ruins, as three last night, as I hear, and it is supposed by hearty fellows that cry, "Do you want light?" and carry links; and that, when they catch a man single, whip into a vault with him, knock him down, strip him from top to toe, blow out their links, and leave the person for dead; and an apothecary's man in Southwark, coming into Fenchurch Street, being so served, and being left for dead, when these villains had done, struck fire with a tinder-box, which they took out of their pockets, lighted their links, and away, and by the glimpse of their lights, as the story goes, the man perceived a dead body lying by him in the said vault. When the murderers were gone, the young man made shift to get out, from whom this relation

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, December 12, 1666.

is spread, and a woman dead in the vault was found. For want of good watches, no person dare, after the close of the evening, pass the streets amongst the ruins.'

So terrible a disaster as the fire of London caused the wildest excitement in the provinces. It was a time of great ignorance and suspicion, and as the means of communicating the real state of the case were very limited and imperfect, the most strange reports got abroad. As the news travelled through the country, we can see the dismay it occasioned. From West Cowes, one John Lysle 'supposes the sad fire in London was chiefly caused by fanatics and strangers, and complains of the French and Dutch strangers who resort to the Isle of Wight. Guards should be kept at landing-places, some trusty person employed to search for and take the names of lodgers in houses, and no stranger allowed to come into the island without good testimonials, for fear of a similar accident. The number of 80,000 French, Dutch, and other strangers, said to be in London, may bring all to destruction.' 'The doleful news of the firing of London,' writes one from Dover, 'makes the same thing feared here, as the Dutch fleet lie in sight taking in men before Boulogne.' At Walmer, 'the generation of fanatic vipers will report the fire as God's revenge for Englishmen's valour at Vlie.'¹

¹ After the defeat of the Dutch fleet, July 25 and 26, 1666, the English, absolute masters of the sea, rode in triumph along the coast, and insulted the Hollanders in their harbours. A squadron, under Sir Robert Holmes, entered the road of Vlie and burnt two men-of-war and a hundred and forty merchantmen, together with the large village of Brandaris: the whole damage was estimated at several millions sterling.

From Yarmouth, we hear that 'a French seaman is before the bailiffs for saying, when told of the fire of London, that it were good news if Yarmouth were on fire. He spoke those words in plain English, but on his examination will not own that he can speak a word of English. Most here judge the City was wilfully set on fire by the French and Dutch who lurk about it.' 'There is great fear in these parts,' writes Lord Carlisle from Naworth, 'the post not coming as usual, and there being a rumour of a great fire in London. I will set forward thither on Friday, unless ordered to remain. I have just heard that the City was set on fire by Anabaptists and other disaffected persons, and have ordered the trained bands to meet and continue in convenient places for the safety of the country.' At Chester, they were 'all in amazement at the heavy judgment fallen on London, which is concluded to be a total devastation and destruction of the metropolis.' At Hull, the 'doleful tidings' that the Dutch had set fire to London arrived; consequently 'the governor has had strong guard set, both by soldiers and townsmen, on the town and the ships in the harbour, causing the masters and their companies to lie aboard. He has secured suspected persons and will turn them out of town, and has committed to close custody all the Dutch prisoners that were out on bail.' 'On the news of the sad fire in London,' we learn from Norwich, 'the mayor ordered the bellman to cry about the city, to give innkeepers notice not to lodge strangers till he had examined them, nor to allow them to go out of the city without his order; also for in-

habitants not to lodge strangers without knowing whence they come.' The country was evidently in a highly nervous condition, and every country town feared that it was about to share the fate of the metropolis.¹

As soon as the flames had been got under, and all fears of a further outbreak removed, the first step of the Council was to institute an inquiry into the cause of the fire. Upon this point the nation was divided into three distinct sets : those who attributed the fire to the designs of the French, the Dutch, and the Papists ; those who attributed it to the vengeance of an offended Deity at the open sin which was allowed to reign supreme in high places ; and those who, like sensible persons, believed that the fire was entirely due to accident and to the combustible nature of the materials with which the houses were then built. The first section were, however, in a large majority. Wading through the vast correspondence of this period which has been preserved by the State, almost every letter which alludes to the subject lays the ruin of London at the door of the foreigner and the Papist. In the different towns in the kingdom the Catholics were keenly watched, whilst Frenchmen and Dutchmen were haled before the magistrates, and might consider themselves fortunate if they were not at once committed to gaol as suspicious characters. The wildest rumours were circulated, and in some places it was dangerous for a foreigner to show his face. Witness after witness came forward and swore to having seen Frenchmen and Dutchmen wandering about the

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, September 5-13, 1666.

country, throwing fire-balls into the open windows of houses. Numbers of innocent persons, but who had the misfortune to profess the creed of Rome, were seized on 'eminent suspicion,' and found to have on them 'several fire-balls as large as tennis balls.' In Warwickshire and Leicestershire suspicion seems to have been very much on the alert, owing to a curious form of theft. Sheep were stolen from the meadows; 'strange robberies have been committed, many sheep having been killed in the fields, and only their tallow taken away; this was thought to be intended for the making of fire-balls, and one malefactor was apprehended who said that he did it through poverty, and sold the tallow.'

The harshest conclusions were drawn from the flimsiest of premisses. To be a foreigner was to be an incendiary; to be a Papist was to be a plotter against English security; to be seen with a ball in the hand was to be the owner of a fire-ball. 'It is impossible,' writes one Ralph Hope from Coventry,¹ 'to persuade the people into any other belief than that the Papists have a design to rise and cut their throats, and they impute the late sad conflagration solely to their continuance and propagation; this has been insinuated by what has happened at Warwick. A boy gathering blackberries sees a man doing something in a ditch, who hastily puts something into a bag and goes away; the boy finds at the place a blackish brown ball, and carries it away before the Deputy-Lieutenants there met. There is no appearance of anything combustibile in it, but all take it to be an

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, September 15, 1666.

unfinished fire-ball ; the boy describes the man and takes his oath ; the whole town takes the alarm ; hue and cries are sent out everywhere to take the man, but in vain ; the town is in a tumult all day, every man in arms, besides the militia horse keeping strict guard all night. Next day Sir H. Pickering, with his troop, dismisses the horse guard, and commands the townsmen home : they peremptorily refuse to obey, and after some high words, tell him, for aught they know, he had a design himself to betray the town. Sir Harry grows angry, and commands the troops to fire unless they disperse ; the townsmen dare them to do it, cocking their loaded muskets, so that, had not the prudence of some prevented, much mischief had been done. The tempest calmed at last, and the townsmen by degrees dropped home. Though the Mayor of Warwick says it was a fire-ball, an ingenuous gentleman says it was no such thing. The Papists thereabouts are well armed, and have frequent and suspicious meetings. The trade of killing sheep and taking out the tallow only is still followed in several places thereabouts.'

The truth was, the country was in one of her most feminine moods. She had come to the conclusion that the fire was due to the Papists, incited by the Dutch and French, and nothing would convince her that her suspicions were strained and groundless. She declined to listen to evidence or to weigh arguments ; it was as she had said, and there was an end of the matter. In vain the Government announced ' that, notwithstanding that many examinations have been taken with great care, by the Lords of the Council

and His Majesty's Ministers, yet nothing hath been yet found to argue it to have been other than the hand of God upon us, a great wind and the season so very dry.'¹ The popular excitement refused to be satisfied. Rumours of Popish plots were rife throughout the kingdom. It was said that designing Catholics were hidden in country houses, that they held secret meetings in the taverns of the villages, and that they bribed the watchmen to take no notice of their proceedings. A letter was intercepted from Paris exhorting the English Catholics to rise and fire the remainder of London. A chambermaid at the 'Unicorn' inn, at Banbury, was brought up before the justices of the peace, and said that certain foreigners had stayed at the inn, that she overheard them whispering, and one said, 'When we have done our mischief we will take our horses and ride out, because we should not be thought to have a hand in it; and afterwards will come in again and bemoan their condition, that they may conclude that we have no hand in it. Then they read a paper, and talked of what the rich devils would do when they saw fire about their ears, and said their charges would be borne, and that they would want no money when in London.' One unhappy Frenchman, Robert Hubert by name, confessed to having 'fired London,' and was executed at Tyburn, 'but denied the fact at the gallows, though before he had stood obstinately to it, and would hardly have been believed on account of his varying answers, but that he took his keeper to the place he had so long affirmed that he

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, September 1666.

fired, and it was the very house where the flames first broke out.' There is little doubt but that this Frenchman was one of those persons, which seasons of great excitement invariably produce, who out of love for notoriety accuse themselves of offences of which they are perfectly innocent. The country was thoroughly alarmed, and informers everywhere readily appeared to give evidence. One charming youth, only ten years of age, an apothecary's errand-boy, accused his father and mother, John and Mary Taylor, of York Street, Covent Garden, of having helped to fire the city, and of having taken him down to Acton to burn a house in that village ! Throughout the principal towns, guiltless persons suspected of having fire-balls in their possession were frequently arrested and confined in the city prison. It was scarcely possible for strangers to stand about in groups, or to join in earnest conversation, without being looked upon as Papists or plotters. Guests on arriving at an inn were searched, their names written down, and then severely cross-examined as to their future proceedings. England was more like a city in a state of siege than a free country.¹

To calm this agitation, the rigours of intolerance were freely invoked. For those outside the pale of the Church of England there was no security. It was impossible for one who was an Anglican to treat with an enemy or to plot for the overthrow of the city : but with a Papist, a Quaker, a Dissenter, every treachery and diabolical undertaking were within the compass of his creed. All priests and Jesuits, at

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, October—December, 1666.

the express wish of the House of Commons, were expelled the country. The laws against Roman Catholics were rigidly enforced. A vote was passed that members of the House of Commons were to receive the Sacrament according to the Church of England, on penalty of imprisonment. All who refused to take the oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance were to be disarmed. Quakers and other Nonconformists were sent to prison, and their numerous petitions for release constitute no small portion of the State Papers of this period. In Holland it was said that the Court had set fire to London, whilst in Padua an account of the conflagration was circulated in Italian, the most remarkable portion of which is that 'at Moorfields the King, the Duke of York, and nobles, came to see Charles the First avenged, but, moved with compassion, stimulated the people to exertion by working themselves.'¹

London, east of the Temple, being one mass of ruins, the first matter to be attended to, now that the flames had been got under and the national fears and prejudices fully avenged by the imprisonment of foreigners, Papists, and Dissenters, was the rebuilding of the city. Accordingly His Majesty issued a declaration 'To his City of London, upon occasion of the late calamity by the lamentable fire.' No man's loss in the late fire, said Charles, was comparable to his; yet he hoped to live to see a much more beautiful city than the one that had been consumed, one well provided against accidents by fire. There must, therefore, he directed, be no hasty rebuilding. Should any persons, on pretence

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, October 22, 1666.

that the ground was their own, erect 'unskilful' houses, the Lord Mayor was authorised to give orders to have the same pulled down. Brick having been found to resist and even extinguish fire, all houses were for the future to be built of brick and stone, with strongly-arched cellars in the basement. The principal streets were to be broad and open, and no alleys allowed unless absolutely necessary. No houses were to be erected within some few feet of the river, and those built were to be 'fair structures for ornament.' Brewers, dyers, sugar-bakers, and others whose trades were carried on by smoke, were to dwell together in some quarter to be specially assigned to them. (Thus, even in the seventeenth century, the desirableness of a fair river frontage and the nuisance of smoke were at least recognised: we certainly have taken our time in acting upon these sensible ideas.) A survey was to be made of the whole ground, and each person was to have his land secured him by Act of Parliament. With regard to the rebuilding of the churches, they were to be recommended to the charity of well-disposed persons. His Majesty then concluded by promising that 'those who shall erect any buildings according to this declaration' shall have the hearth-money duties remitted for seven years.¹ The following year the Rebuilding Act (19 Chas. II. c. 3) was passed.

The loss occasioned by the Great Fire of London was estimated at 13,000 houses, 89 churches, including St. Paul's Cathedral, and property to the amount of nearly ten millions sterling.

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, September 13, 1666.

A NATIONAL SCARE.

'Going out of church immediately after sermon, some people of St. James' parish passed by and told me the enemy had entered the town.'


HARTE.

A FEW years after Charles II. had been restored to the throne of his ancestors, a war, disgraceful in its origin, and doubly disgraceful by the marked incapacity with which it was conducted, was forced upon the United Provinces.

The prosperity of the Dutch, their commercial rivalry with the English, and their superiority in every department of trade, were viewed with extreme jealousy by our merchants. It was hoped that the commercial predominance we could not obtain by superior industry and ability might be attained by superior strength. Charles, who thought he saw a prospect of filling his rapidly emptying treasury, and who hoped, by defeating De Witt, the Grand Pensionary, to reinstate the young Prince of Orange on the throne, and thus bring the States to a dependence upon England, had no objection to the war. His brother, the Duke of York, who hated the Dutch because they opposed a new African company of which he was the head, and who wished for an opportunity of gaining distinction, cordially sided with the war party,

and did all in his power to rouse the languid Charles to action. Parliament, acted upon by the avidity of the mercantile classes, voted for hostilities, and were generous in furnishing supplies. Satisfaction was demanded from the Dutch for imaginary grievances ; redress was refused, and war declared.

On the victories of the English navy—for, in the earlier engagements, fortune was auspicious to the fleet of Charles—France, who had no desire to see England's dominion over the seas supreme, united, in spite of all entreaties from Whitehall, with the States-General. A third enemy now appeared upon the scene. Denmark, with a double-dealing which plainly indicated her contempt for Charles and his Government, quickly followed the example of the policy of Versailles, and proved a most irritating thorn in our side. Thus alone, England had to bear the brunt of the storm her guilty greed had raised. It is true that at first in this unequal contest she managed to inflict severe injuries upon the enemy, but Charles was soon made painfully aware that the ends for which the war had been undertaken were likely to prove entirely abortive. The Dutch, though defeated in the different engagements that ensued, were not disheartened ; they were actively making preparations to recommence hostilities ; their credit stood high, and money was never lacking to support their operations. Whilst England, on the other hand, was soured and impoverished, her towns and villages had been laid low by the terrible plague, her capital had but recently been the sport of the flames, and now to her dismay



she saw the whole coast-line of Europe, from the North Cape to the Pyrenees, arrayed against her in arms. Charles was not the man to extricate himself from a false position by a resolute, if even an unjust, policy. He hated anything that interfered with the voluptuous ease by which he was surrounded, and this Dutch war made calls upon his purse and time which both annoyed and embarrassed him. He threw out hints which were carried to the Hague that he was not indisposed to compromise matters ; from lording it as the bully he now pleaded as the suppliant. The proud country, but a few years before the terror of Europe, began to repent her of her rashness and to sue for peace. Negotiations with regard to the termination of hostilities were entered into at Bréda, and the proposals of Charles were discussed by the assembled French, Danish, Dutch, and English plenipotentiaries.

Meanwhile De Witt had no intention of calmly abandoning the advantages fortune had been gracious enough to place in his hands. He thought he saw an opportunity of striking a blow which, whilst restoring to the Dutch the honour lost during the war, would at the same time obtain full compensation for those injuries which the wanton ambition and injustice of the English had inflicted. He declined to agree to a suspension of arms during the conduct of the negotiations at Bréda, but, on the contrary, with a promptness all the more active since it was stimulated by the prospects of revenge, he hastened all naval preparations, and was soon in a position to carry out the scheme he

meditated. Thanks to republicans like Algernon Sydney, who had taken up their abode at the Hague, and who were among the bitterest foes of the policy of the English Council, the Grand Pensionary knew that his enemy—with her captains incompetent, her sailors unpaid and half starved, and her navy greatly reduced in strength—was incapable of effecting any formidable resistance, and that he had only to strike rapidly and decisively to establish himself as complete master of the situation. He resolved upon teaching England a lesson such as she should not easily forget, and to give her a fright such as she had not experienced since the days when the ‘Armada’ was sighted off the Lizard. Accordingly orders were issued to De Ruyter, the dreaded Dutch admiral, for his fleet, then riding at anchor in the Zuyder Zee, to bear up towards the east coast of England, and to blockade the Thames. At midday, June 1, 1667, his ships quitted their moorings, and once again in our history a hostile squadron was to stand out to sea to menace our shores.

These preparations created no little consternation in the minds of the Council at Whitehall. Charles, anxious to save all the money he could for his own pleasures, and feeling assured that the negotiations at Breda would be satisfactorily settled, had taken the first opportunity, when peace was proposed, of cutting down his naval expenses. He had written to the Duke of York, as Lord Admiral, not to keep in pay such third-rate ships as had been ordered to be maintained, to discharge all men-of-war which required

considerable repairs, and to lay them up in Portsmouth, and to retain 'only a squadron of small ships to distract the enemy and disturb their trade.' At the same time Sir William Coventry, a Commissioner of Admiralty, was instructed to request the Navy Commissioners to reduce the crews of the fire-ships then stationed at Portsmouth, Dover, Harwich, and Chatham, and to leave them 'only a sufficient number to do service, or at the most so many as may suffice to weigh their anchors.'¹ The same absurd policy of disbandment and reduction before peace was definitely assured, was also adopted in our military establishments. The garrisons which guarded our ports were ill supplied with ammunition, the forts along the coast were unprotected, and volunteers for active service discouraged. 'The Dutch are known to be abroad,' moans chatty Sam Pepys, 'with eighty sail of ships of war and twenty fire-ships, and the French come into the Channel with twenty sail of men-of-war and five fire-ships, while we have not a ship at sea to do them any hurt with, but are calling in all we can, while our ambassadors are treating at Breda, and the Dutch look upon them as come to beg peace, and use them accordingly.'

When, however—thanks to the escape of French prisoners from Rochelle, and to the return of fishing-smacks—it began to be definitely ascertained that the country was threatened by a Dutch invasion, less insane measures were put into operation. Every one was struck with anger and terror; trade was at a standstill, and outward-bound

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, edited by Mrs. Green, May 24 and 29, 1667.

merchantmen hastened back to the nearest English port for shelter. The Council roused itself to action. Lord Arlington sent despatches to the Lords-Lieutenant of the eastern and southern maritime counties, requesting them to give orders to the militia of their respective shires to 'be in such a readiness that upon the shortest warning they may assemble and be in arms for the defence of the coast, in case of any attempt or appearance of the enemy's fleet; taking care in the meantime that the several beacons upon and near the coast be duly watched by the respective hundreds in which they are, for the preventing any surprise or sudden descent of the enemy.' They were also, to present an imposing, even if hollow, front to the foe. 'His Majesty,' continues Arlington, 'commands me particularly to mind you that, in all places where you shall be obliged to make head or appear to the enemy, you make the greatest show you can in numbers, and more especially of horse, even though it be of such as are otherwise wholly unfit and improper for nearer service, horse being the force that will most discourage the enemy from landing for any such attempt.' Fireships were hastily collected and fitted with ingredients from the Tower; whilst competent men were to be pressed into the service without the authorities staying for warrants or orders. 'The time will not permit the observation of these forms; pray use all possible despatch,' writes Sir W. Coventry, who a few days ago was suggesting reduction.

Along the coast the militia were rapidly getting under arms, and the Deputy-Lieutenants of Kent, acting in conjunction

with the governors of the different forts, were arranging the best measures for defence. The Lord-Lieutenant of Essex was ordered to send to Lee such of the troops as were not already despatched to Harwich. Half the militia of Hertfordshire were ordered to Barnet. Half the militia of Surrey were marched to Southwark and Lambeth, whilst the other half were commanded to hold themselves in readiness at the shortest notice. The men of Wiltshire and Berkshire were sent to protect the Isle of Wight, those of Dorsetshire to Portland and Weymouth, whilst a detachment from Hampshire was told off to Portsmouth. At Harwich the young Duke of Monmouth, with a large body of the aristocracy and the country gentry, was on guard, awaiting the arrival of the Dutch. The fortifications along the coast were under the special inspection of the Duke of York. Sir Edward Spragg, nicknamed the 'Irish Papist' by the people who hated him on account of his religion, protected the Medway. At Gillingham a strong chain was thrown across the river, and beyond it lay the King's ships. To complete the measures adopted for the safety of the country, orders were issued that no accounts should be printed of the whereabouts of the men-of-war, nor any news circulated except under directions from Government, 'such a course being dangerous when the enemy are masters of the seas.'¹

Undeterred by these preparations, the squadron of De Ruyter bore up towards the coast of Kent, and the thunder

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, June 4-10, 1667.

of his guns could be plainly heard at Harwich and Dover bombarding some helpless village or maritime hamlet. The following account of the proceedings of the Dutch 'in the river of London, and in the haven of Chatham, and the Isle of Sheppey,' is from a curious journal printed at Amsterdam, a copy of which is now amongst the State Papers.¹

'The Dutch fleet,' it begins, 'set sail June 1, 1667, under command of Lieut.-Admiral de Ruyter. On the 4th a heavy storm arose from the south-south-west, by which some ships were forced to cut their anchors; but on the 7th they again came safely to anchor before the river of London. On this the Admiral put out a signal for all the principal officers to come on board and hold a council of war, how they might best sail up the river of London, with some of the lightest ships, to see whether they could there take some of the King's ships. Thereupon on the 9th seventeen ships of war, four advice boats, and four fire-ships sailed up the river Thames, under command of Lieut.-Admiral Van Ghent, with whom went De Witt as deputy of their High Mightinesses the States-General, in the ship "Agatha." The same evening they arrived between Queensborough and Gravesend, but there being nothing to be done there, on the 10th they came back to Queensborough, where De Ruyter had some ships to support them.

'Having returned to the river of Rochester, conquering

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, June 13, 1667. 'Description of the attack made by the Dutch fleet on the English ships in the Thames at Chatham and the Isle of Sheppey, and of all their proceedings from June 1-13, with a plan of the Thames and an engraving of the engagement.'

the Island of Sheppey and Queensborough, a stronghold lying thereon, they thought good to attack the fort of Sheerness, which the English were beginning to make, a little while before, for the defence of the passage to Rochester and Chatham. Our cannons so stormed the place that the enemy left it, before Colonel Dolman, who had been sent for by some messengers, had arrived.¹ Our people found there an entire royal magazine, with heavy anchors and cables, and hundreds of masts. Our people took on board the ships as many of the cables, masts, and round woods as they could, and they also acquired fifteen heavy pieces, shooting balls of 18 lbs. ; the rest was destroyed or rendered useless, and the magazine burnt. The damage done to the English at this island was estimated at more than four tons of gold. It is a beautiful and fruitful island. Every one was strictly forbidden, on pain of heavy punishment, to injure the inhabitants in life or goods.'

Sheerness in the hands of the Dutch, De Ruyter pursued his victorious progress by sailing up the Medway to bombard Chatham, and to attack the King's ships riding at anchor, to guard the invulnerable chain that had been thrown across the river.

'On the 12th,' continues the Dutch journal, 'the wind

¹ 'June 11.—This morning Pett (ship-builder to the Admiralty) writes us word that Sheerness is lost last night after two or three hours' dispute. The enemy hath possessed himself of that place; which is very sad, and puts us in great fears of Chatham.'—*Pepys' Diary*.

'Sheerness Fort was not in posture of defence, for the which Sir R. Spragg is much blamed.' To Lord Conway.—*State Papers, Domestic*, June 15, 1667.

being east-north-east, the Hollanders sailed before the tide about four miles up the river of Chatham, under command of Thomas Tobias. There they made a severe attack. Before their coming the English had sunk there seven fire-ships, and enclosed the river with a thick and heavy iron chain running on pulleys, which turned on wheels. Six of their ships, distributed in good order, lay before the chain ; at the one end lay four, and at the other end two stout frigates, which crossed the water.'

And now humiliation was to be in store for the English. 'With more than mortal boldness,' the journal goes on to record, 'the Dutch made an attack against all these dangers. Captain Brakel offered himself, and attacking with his frigate an English frigate called the "Jonathan" of forty guns, took it and burnt another English frigate by means of a fire-ship ; then the other four ships were left by their comrades, the crews in confusion sprang overboard, and our people took the ship "Royal Charles," fitted to bear one hundred pieces of cannon, and with thirty-two guns on board : it was formerly commanded by the English Admiral Monk. Nothing more costly has been made in England, and it must have cost almost 100,000 dollars in the gilding alone. They also took the "Charles the Fifth," which with two others of the largest ships, the "Matthias" and "Castle of Honingen," are burnt. The chain was burnt into pieces, and all within it destroyed and annihilated : so that the English lost the Admirals of the red and white flag, besides others of

their largest ships, as the "Royal Charles," the "Royal Oak," the "Loyal London," the "Royal James," which they had sunk, the "Matthias," the "Charles the Fifth," the "Castle of Honingen," and two stout frigates, the one named the "Jonathan;" besides two other large ships and a good number of fire-ships, which they had sunk to stop the passage. On land our people did not do much, for all was in commotion, and the English with 12,000 men came against them in arms: so the Dutch abandoned the places which they had taken, and came again with their ships into the river Thames. Vice-Admiral Van Ghent was personally present throughout, and with other brave heroes of our fatherland manfully forwarded this great work. God keep them henceforth and give them yet more success in their actions, that beloved peace may again descend from heaven upon us, and pride be put down.'

The merchants' ships they will burn; oh tell
How first he should guard his own shores well!
For rumour reports, all the country over,
That the wolf was burned in his own cover.

This version of England's defeat, though written by the enemy, is substantially true, and amply borne out by the rest of the correspondence before us.¹ Letter after letter was despatched from Chatham to Whitehall, and all told the same sad tale: the Dutch had forced the chain at Chatham, had with little opposition burned several of the finest ships in the English navy, and had carried off the 'Royal Charles,'

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*. See Letters to Lord Conway and Sir J. Williamson, June 14 and 15, 1667.

the pride of the fleet, as a trophy to Holland. Yet the victory of the Dutch is not such a matter of surprise, when we learn how ill supplied the English were with the means of resistance. 'You may wonder,' writes Captain Neville to his brother at Rome,¹ 'our block-houses did so little service against the Dutch; but their Captains, being questioned, are come off well, having made it appear that they have long since made their defects known to the Council. Some wanted guns, some platforms to mount them upon, and carriages, others bullets, others had bullets too big for their guns. The answer from the Council was, they needed not to trouble themselves, for the peace being as good as concluded, they would not order any more money to be issued.' The honour and fame of his kingdom were trifles utterly beneath the notice of the idle and voluptuous Charles. 'Sir H. Cholmly,' writes Pepys, 'came to me this day and tells me the Court is as mad as ever, and that the night the Dutch burned our ships the King did sup with my Lady Castlemaine, at the Duchess of Monmouth's, and they were all mad in hunting of a poor moth.'

The country, however, did not regard this national disgrace with the indifference of the Court. Apart from the shame which ignoble defeat must ever occasion in the patriotic and the high-minded, Englishmen, impoverished and defenceless, knew not to what bitter ends the Dutch might yet press the victory they had gained. 'Was England,' men asked, 'which had wrecked the Armada, only to have

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, June 20, 1667.

escaped the Spaniard to become the victim of the hated Dutchman. The greatest excitement prevailed, and the temper of the people was in one of its ugliest moods. 'The members of the Council,' Pepys tells us, 'were ready to fall together by the ears at the Council table, arraigned one another of being guilty of the counsel that brought us into this misery by laying up all the great ships.' Clarendon, the Lord Chancellor, who had advised the sale of Dunkirk, the retaining of useless Tangiers, and the marriage with the Spanish Catherine of Portugal, had his windows broken and his trees cut down: a gibbet was painted upon his gate, 'and these words writ, "Three sights to be seen, Dunkirk, Tangiers, and a barren Queene."' The sailors, whose pay was in arrears, and who heard of their King lavishing vast sums upon the ladies of his harem, threatened to desert to the Dutch, whilst their wives walked up the streets crying in front of the offices of the Navy Commissioners, 'This comes of your not paying our husbands, and now our work is undone or done by hands that understand it not.'

In the city men knew not which way to turn, so distressed were they by fear and confusion. 'The merchants are undone,' writes one John Rushworth.¹ 'Our great stocks of money have shut up their shops. People are ready to tear their hair off their heads. Great importunity hath been used at Whitehall for a Parliament, and more

¹ *State Papers, Domestic.* See Letters to Lord Conway and Sir J. Williamson, June 15, 1667.

particularly by Sir George Saville, but nothing will prevail ; there is one great gownman against it, and all the bishops and Papists, and all those who have conjured and cheated the King. News came this day to the King, that the French are come from Brest and appear before the Isle of Wight ; some at Court give out that they are friends and not enemies. We expect the Dutch as far as Woolwich. People are fled from Greenwich and Blackwall with their families and children. We are betrayed, let it light where it will.' The agent of Lord Conway takes the same desponding view of matters, and thus writes to his master : ¹ ' Upon the first attempt of the Dutch at Chatham,' he says, dating his letter from London, ' here was such an astonishment upon men's hearts, that every one went to his goldsmith to recall his moneys, but they were all sent back empty-handed, and the King was forced to set forth a declaration to save the said goldsmiths from being so much persecuted as they were. Since that, people's hearts are a little better settled, though we still lie under the same prejudice of uncertainty as before. As to matter of peace from Breda, 'tis written that the common people in Holland are so satisfied since the late loss and disgrace, never to be forgotten by us, that they talk no more of peace, but on such high terms as I hope we are not yet so low as to submit unto them, though I confess we are lower already than I did ever fear to see poor England, and in such a strait as we know not scarce how to help ourselves. . . . Never was England brought to such an extremity,

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, June 29, 1667.

never so benumbed with such a lethargy, that, seeing our enemies so watchful, so providing, and at last so provided, we still were so resolutely blind as not to endeavour the prevention of those miseries which almost every eye could have easily foreseen; but the observation of the old heathen takes place: *Quos Jupiter vult perdere prius dementat*. However, after all this complaint I will yet hope that God will have mercy upon us, and that we may once more be in capacity to defend ourselves and to terrify our enemies.'

As is always the case when disaster overtakes either a nation or an individual, rumour exaggerated the evil. It began to be reported that not only had the Dutch burnt Chatham, but that they had also burnt Queensborough, Gravesend, Harwich, Colchester, and Dover; that the French were massing their forces at Dunkirk for the invasion of England; that there were traitors not only in the Council, but amongst the troops drawn up to defend our shores; and that the King, disgusted and intimidated, had fled from his throne and gone no one knew whither.¹ The contents of the State Papers of this time reveal to us the agitation that prevailed in the provinces. 'When we heard,' writes one Watts from Deal to Sir J. Williamson,² 'the Dutch were gone up the river, and some of our best ships fired by them, and the "Royal Charles" in their possession, and little or no opposition, the common people and almost all others ran mad, some cry-

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*. See Letters to Lord Conway and Sir J. Williamson, June 13, 14, and 17, 1667.

² *Ibid.* June 15 and 18, 1667.

ing out we were sold, others that there were traitors in the Council; then the loss of Dunkirk, the dividing of the fleet, the disbanding of the army, the non-payment of the seamen, and permitting so many merchant ships to go out of the land, and several other things were called in question. . . . None abuse their judgment so much as to blaspheme his most Sacred Majesty, but desperate outcries against some great persons whom they commonly name. I have several times been in great danger, desiring them out of their passion. Most eminent people of this place have sent their goods to Sandwich or Canterbury.' As at Deal, so at Hull. 'We are here much terrified,' writes Charles Wittington,¹ 'at the unexpected news of the Dutch firing four of our great ships and taking one, and ten more being in great danger; and some do not stick to say, things were better ordered in Cromwell's time, for then seamen had all their pay, and were not permitted to swear, but were clapped in the bilboes; and if the officers did, they were turned out, and then God gave them a blessing to them; but now, all men are for making themselves great, and few mind the King and the nation's interest, but mind plays and women, and fling away much money that would serve to pay the seamen. This is the seamen's discourse.'

One Bentham thus makes moan from Lowick: 'Lord! that it was possible that after the first tidings of the Dutch fleet coming out upon some desperate design, no platforms were raised, nor sufficient cannon mounted,

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, June 16, 1667.

nor soldiers sent to make a considerable defence! How strangely were all our councillors lulled into a dead sleep of security, that nothing less than so mortal a blow and irreparable a loss could awaken them! Must we be the first that are registered to posterity for casting or giving away our principal arms, both of offence and defence, while we treat with a numerous, malicious, armed, and active enemy?¹ From Lowestoft and Aldborough, people were hastily removing their goods into the interior. At Yarmouth the sailors were much enraged, and 'every one talks at a strange rate,' whilst the drums were beating for volunteers to enlist under Lord Townshend. At Lynn, 'the news of the burning of our ships by the Hollanders causes strange discourse.' At Hull, the people 'were afflicted but not daunted, and care was taken to suppress intestine enemies and repulse invaders.' At Whitby, all were much perplexed that the Dutch vapour so publicly in the Thames.' At Newcastle, 'people were at their wits' end,' and gave up the place as lost. Chester, the headquarters of the Nonconformists, 'was much perplexed. Some said we were asleep, or should have fortified ourselves, knowing the enemy near. All concluded that there was treachery in the business, and hoped the contrivers would receive the reward due to those who betray King and country.' At Minehead, 'the loss of the shipping in the harbour was resented as the greatest dishonour that ever the King and kingdom lay under, especially when discourses and prepara-

¹ *State Papers, Domestic.* See Letters to Lord Conway and Sir J. Williamson, June 16, 1667.

tions were but of peace.' At Plymouth, 'the news of the Dutch fleet lying in the Thames makes many look sadly.' Throughout the correspondence, anger, astonishment, fear, patriotism, and a longing for revenge are uppermost in the different writers' breasts. Bristol,¹ owing to the number of disaffected persons it harboured, appears to have been the only port which showed itself favourable to the enemy.

Fortunately for England, De Ruyter failed to take advantage of the victory he had gained and the panic he had created. The forts of Gravesend, Tilbury, and the Tower, ill-supplied with ammunition and out of repair, alone stood between him and London. Had he issued orders for his ships to sail up the river, nothing could have prevented the capital from falling into his hands. These instructions, happily for us—whether he feared the vessels sunk off Blackwall to hinder his progress, or whether he objected to trusting his fleet within a narrow channel, or whether he rated too highly the enthusiasm of the militia drawn up to defend the coast, or whatever was the reason—De Ruyter failed to give. Taking advantage of the ebb, he dropped down to the buoy of the Nore, much to the surprise and relief of the inhabitants of the metropolis.²

This unexpected retreat of the Dutch restored the nation to its senses, and plans of defence were discussed on all sides, so as to prevent the humiliation of the past from being

¹ *State Papers, Domestic.* See Letters to Lord Conway and Sir J. Williamson, June 16, 1667.

² *Ibid.* June 16, 1667.

repeated. At such a crisis the impoverished state of the exchequer became bitterly felt, and crushed all energy and activity at their very outset. Nothing could be done for want of ready money. The men in the dockyards were so mutinous at their wages not being forthcoming, that at Chatham the Duke of Albemarle could only persuade three workmen out of a body of eleven hundred to do any business.¹ Ships that ought to have been put at once in commission were lying still untouched in dock, because the Navy Commissioners had no funds for the necessary repairs and fittings. Unpaid sailors went loafing about the quays or singing in companies up and down the streets, vowing they would desert to France or to Holland unless they had their due. Merchants and contractors declined to supply any more goods to the Government unless their past accounts were settled. It was evident to the Council that the first step was to raise supplies, as without money all talk of defensive measures was but waste of time. The loyalty of the people of all grades was therefore appealed to. A circular was drawn up, nominally by the King, asking for help. The Lord Chancellor was instructed to make its contents known to the legal profession; the Lords-Lieutenant were to be the channels of communication with the aristocracy and the landed gentry; whilst the Archbishop of Canterbury was to appeal to the clergy,² 'because,' said the pious Charles, 'you are to deal with a sort of persons endued with discre-

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, June 14, 1667.

² *Ibid.* Entry Book, 26, p. 11.

tion and ingenuity, who cannot forget what tenderness we have for them, what care to protect and support them, and how much their interest and welfare is involved in ours.' In this begging letter all loyal subjects were enjoined, 'owing to the insolent spirit of our enemies,' to make a voluntary liberal advance of what sums of money they can afford by way of loan towards the supply of our present and pressing occasions in this time of public danger ;' nor did his Majesty doubt 'but that your endeavours, which we assure ourself you will engage to the utmost, will meet with so much loyalty and prudence in them as easily to produce what we reasonably expect, a speedy and cheerful compliance with our necessities in this so important a juncture of affairs.'¹

When the squire and poor vicar were appealed to, it was not probable that so wealthy a corporation as that of the East India Company would escape. Accordingly, a circular was addressed to the directors, applying to them 'for a present loan of 20,000*l.* for the use of our navy ;' and 'such is the importance of this conjuncture, that we cannot think you will wonder if we be more than ordinary pressing in this desire, in which you will do us a very seasonable service ; and we assure you it shall, upon occasion, be readily remembered to the advantage of your Company, in any its concerns wherein you shall have need of our royal favour and protection.'² Yet, in spite of the urgency with

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, June 21, 1667.

² *Ibid.* July 5, 1667.

which he pressed these appeals for pecuniary aid, the King declined to set an example of economy. His Court was as extravagant and luxurious as ever. Though he demanded contributions for the maintenance of his navy and for the defence of his kingdom against the enemy, he had always the means at hand to reward a favourite or to enrich a mistress. Surrounded by a terrible distress, with provisions scarce, and coal at five pounds a chaldron, the establishment of the Court was a byword for waste and iniquitous profusion. 'God forgive us all!' sighs Pepys. 'It was computed that the Parliament had given the King for this war only, besides all prizes, and besides the 200,000*l.* which he was to spend of his own revenue, to guard the sea, above 5,000,000*l.* and odd 100,000*l.*, which is a most prodigious sum. It is strange how everybody do nowadays reflect upon Oliver and commend him, what brave things he did, and made all the neighbour princes fear him; while here a prince, come in with all the love and prayers and good liking of his people, who have given greater signs of loyalty and willingness to serve him with their estates than ever was done by any people, hath lost all so soon, that it is a miracle what way a man could devise to lose so much in so little time.'

Still, in spite of the worthless sovereign then on the throne, the loyalty of the nation declined to be appealed to in vain. The Ordnance Commissioners, who had previously lent 40,000*l.*, added to the loan another 20,000*l.* The London citizens offered 10,000*l.* to be spent entirely on

fortifying Gravesend, Tilbury, Woolwich, Sheerness, and other places on the Thames; and Prince Rupert, assisted by Lord Craven, was ordered to superintend the proceedings. Instructions were given to fill the magazines at Greenwich and Blackwall with ammunition. Vessels heavily laden with stones were sunk off Woolwich and Blackwall, whilst between Woolwich and London Bridge were stationed '70 bilanders, 70 or 80 smacks, and 337 other ships, some great, some less,' for the protection of the river.¹ It appears that the owners of these vessels strongly objected to their shipping being pressed into the King's service without compensation, and demanded a month's pay in advance. They were, however, politely informed by Sir Wm. Coventry that 'the King hath taken other men's ships and sunk them, and may take theirs also in this case, as justly as the others. The intention at present is only to use them to protect the river Thames; if they be used further, there will be opportunity of timely notice of it, and the owners in that case will have all reasonable satisfaction.'² Besides, added Sir William, the proprietors of these vessels should remember that their ships were taken up for the defence and security of their own interest as well as that of others in the river. With this consolation the murmuring owners had to content themselves.

During the last few days a westerly breeze sprang up, and a heavy fog hung like a shroud over the mouth of the

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, June 13-18, 1667.

² *Ibid.* June 19, 1667.

Thames. The watchers consequently failed to detect the position of the enemy, but it was rumoured that the Dutch flats were hovering about the east coast, awaiting a favourable opportunity to effect a landing. Consequently, great excitement prevailed at the ports in the neighbourhood of De Ruyter's vessel. At Harwich, several troops of horse and companies of militia held themselves in readiness for action, whilst colliers disguised as men-of-war, with jack, ensign, and pendant, were laid across the arm of the sea from Landguard Fort to the side beacon, with holes cut in their sterns, ready to be sunk in case of the enemy's approach. At Ipswich, vessels were anchored in front of the harbour, prepared to be sent to the bottom at the first intimation of a Dutch invasion. Yarmouth was ready for any emergency. 'We have here,' writes Sir William Doyley to Sir Peter Gleane,¹ '2,000 foot and five troops of good horse; if the enemy land, we resolve to sally with 1,000 foot and four troops, to try their metal upon the Downs. If they attack us by boats, we are prepared to make our defence to the utmost. A good ship is ready at the boom to be sunk, if there be occasion; two more are ready to be sunk at the pier head. Our guns are fixed, our hearts are up, and I am confident there's many of the officers and soldiers wish the Dutch were in the road. In my whole life I never saw so much ready resolution in men as I find here.' As the fog lifted, it was seen that the enemy had not sailed northwards; for the present, the object of the Dutch was to

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, June 22, 1667.

prevent the English fleet from holding communication with London ; hence, when the wind was easterly, they anchored in the Thames, knowing that ships could not well come from north and south, but when the wind changed to the west they lay-to between Harwich and the North Foreland.

After a fortnight's inactivity, it became evident that the Dutch were meditating vigorous measures. Part of the fleet stood out to sea, and sailed northward, to intercept the fleet of Sir Jeremy Smith, then on the north-eastern coast ; the remainder, after hovering off Harwich, by a clever manœuvre cast anchor close to Landguard Fort, 'a way our great ships never used to venture.' In the uncertain light of a summer night, and under cover of their guns, the Dutch landed over 2,000 men, with a strong body of pikes. Lord Suffolk at once marched down to meet the foe, and a severe engagement ensued. Meanwhile a party of some three or four hundred Dutch ran along the beach, and attempted to scale Landguard Fort. They came briskly up with their cutlasses drawn, crying deridingly, in allusion to the negotiations at Breda, 'Peace ! peace !' They were, however, met with a severe fire, and, though for well-nigh an hour they repeated assault after assault, were continually repulsed. At last, discouraged and demoralised, they ran away, 'leaving some of their ladders, their hand-grenades, and a case of very handsome pistols ; and as the ships saw them within the fort in the Salt Roads they bestowed upon them a bullet welcome.' Nor was the force opposed to the Earl of Suffolk more successful. From

eleven o'clock at night to two in the morning the English and the Dutch were hotly engaged one with the other, neither side gaining any pronounced victory, until, the dawn breaking, and the tide floating their boats, the enemy thought it prudent to beat a retreat, and run off to their ships. The loss of the English was trifling, but that of the Dutch severe.¹

Thus repulsed, the enemy turned their bows towards Aldborough Bay: here nine ships cast anchor, whilst the remainder sailed southwards. And now, during the rest of the month of July, we hear of the Dutch fleet appearing at various places, causing the greatest alarm to the inhabitants, yet seldom acting upon the aggressive. For a time they sailed about the Sledway and Bardsey sands, being, we are told, 'quiet neighbours, though still having an aching tooth against Harwich.' Then they appeared off Plymouth, where De Ruyter attempted to land and steal some sheep, but was compelled to retire, as the coasts were well guarded. After this they anchored in Bigbury Bay, forcing all the militia in Cornwall and Devonshire to rise in arms to defend the coast. Then steering eastwards, they burnt two small vessels at Torquay, and passed the Isle of Wight, 'when the people took alarm.' Once more they took up their old moorings at the mouth of the Thames, where an engagement ensued 'between the Dutch under De Ruyter and the English under Sir Edward Spragg and Lord Craven, in which the former were worsted. The English

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, July 2-4, 1667.

commanders were accused of not having made the most of their opportunity in pursuing the enemy, but vindicated their inactivity by attributing all the blame to the high winds that were then blowing dead in their teeth. 'Else, had the weather been favourable, they would have destroyed the whole of the Dutch squadron.'

This affair was the end of hostilities. On August 24, 1667, the peace with Holland, France, and Denmark was proclaimed. It was received throughout the country with great rejoicings. The national delight is plainly evinced by the bulletins, among the State Papers, from the different ports in the kingdom, when it became definitely known that the treaty of Breda had been signed. At Weymouth, 'the peace as it were raised the dead to life, and made them rich in thought, though their purses are empty, for the town is exceedingly poor.' At Lynn 'the bells have hardly lain still since the news of peace.' At Deal the peace was solemnly proclaimed 'with arms and trumpets, and a procession of magistrates and soldiers,' amid the cheers of the mob and the thunder from the guns of Walmer and Sandown. News of similar rejoicings were despatched to London from Newcastle, Yarmouth, Margate, Dover, and the chief ports in the Channel. It was hoped, at last, that peace would usher in a reign of prosperity, and the Parliament that was about to be assembled redress the grievances of the past.

We know who was made the scapegoat for the late misdeeds. The Lord Chancellor Clarendon was then the best hated man in the kingdom. To his counsel were attributed

the sale of Dunkirk, the stoppage of the seamen's wages, the disgrace at Chatham, and the unsuccessful conclusion of the war. He was offered up as a sacrifice to appease the people, and commanded to resign the seals. His dismissal, however, failed to satisfy the national hate. On the meeting of Parliament he was impeached, and sentence of banishment passed upon him. Among the State Papers of this period there is the following vituperative epitaph on the fallen 'statesman ; of the numerous bitter attacks of which Clarendon was the subject, it is perhaps the most severe and scurrilous ¹ :—

Pride, lust, ambition, and the people's hate,
The kingdom's broker, the ruin of the State,
Dunkirk's sad loss, divider of the fleet,
Tangiers' compounder for a barren sheet.
The shrub of gentry married to the Crown,
His daughter to the heir has tumbled down ;
The grand affronter of the noble lies
Grovvelling in dirt as a just sacrifice,
To please an offended king. Abused nation,
Who could believe this sudden alteration ?
God is revenged too, for the stones he took
From aged Paul's to make a nest for the rook.²
Those cormorants of State, as well as he,
We more than hope in the same plight to see.
Go on, great Prince, thy people do rejoice ;
Methink I hear the kingdom's total voice

¹ *State Papers, Domestic*, August 31, 1667. See also the preface to the Calendar of this reign by Mrs. Green.

² Clarendon's new house near St. James was nicknamed Dunkirk House, 'from the general opinion of his having a good bribe for the selling of that town,' and was partly built with the stones of St. Paul's Cathedral, lately gutted by the great fire.

Applauding this day's action to be such
As roasting of the Rump, or beating of the Dutch.
Now look upon thy withered cavaliers,
That for reward have nothing had but tears ;
Thanks to this Wiltshire hog,¹ son of the spittle,
Had they been looked on, he had had but little.
Break up the coffers of the hoarding thief,
Three millions will be found to make him chief.
I have said enough of linsey-wolsey Hide,
His sacrilege, ambition, lust, and pride.

¹ Clarendon was the son of Henry Hyde, of Dinton, Wiltshire.

THE END.



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